





THE  
*ACTS OF THE APOSTLES*  
MADE EASY  
TO THE  
YOUNG AND UNLEARNED,  
BY A  
SHORT PARAPHRASE, NOTES AND REFLECTIONS.

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And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the *Lord's* house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it, *Isa. ii. 2.* A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; & the Lord will hasten it in his time, chap. *lx. 22.*

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, *Mat. xiii. 31, 32.*

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath *God* chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence, *1 Cor. i. 27, &c.*

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*By WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, D. D.*  
ONE OF THE MINISTERS IN AIR,  
AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST, FOR THE USE OF  
THE UNLEARNED, WITH A PRACTICAL SEQUEL.

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A I R:  
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M,DCC,XCII.

THE ACTS,  
OR  
*DOINGS OF THE APOSTLES*  
SENT BY  
CHRIST TO PREACH;

Matth. x. 2, &c. Luke xxiv. 48.; chiefly PETER and PAUL, the rest only mentioned by the by, as being less laborious and successful. Rather the title should be *Acts*, without *the*.

And JESUS came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matth. xxviii. 18, &c.

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the *Jews*, and also to the *Greeks*, repentance toward GOD, and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Acts xx. 20, 21.

For to me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain, Phil. i. 21. Nihil difficile amanti.



# DEDICATION.

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
JOHN FERGUSSON, Esq.  
LATE OF DOONHOLM,

WHO, AFTER SOME YEARS  
OF UNIVERSALLY ADMIR'D DILIGENCE,  
INTEGRITY, AND USEFULNESS,  
ACQUIRED A HANDSOME FORTUNE, IN CALCUTTA OF BENGAL;  
AND HAD THE PIOUS RESOLUTION, IN PRIME OF LIFE,  
TO BEQUEATH,  
FOR THE FAVOURITE TOWN OF HIS BIRTH,  
AND EARLIEST ACQUAINTANCE WITH RIGHT PRINCIPLES,  
THE SUM OF  
*THREE THOUSAND POUNDS STERLING:*  
THE INTEREST OF ONE THOUSAND  
FOR BEHOOF OF  
THE TWO ESTABLISHED CLERGYMEN IN AIR;  
OF ANOTHER,  
TO BE DIVIDED AMONG  
THE FOUR ESTABLISHED SCHOOLMASTERS;  
AND OF THE THIRD,  
FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE POOR.  
MONUMENTUM ÆRE PERENNIUS.

HIS MUCH INDEBTED FRIEND

*THE AUTHOR.*

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*O felix hominum genus,  
Si vestros animos amor  
Quo cælum regitur, regat.*

BOETIUS.

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THE Author, from sincere gratitude, had it in view to prefix a list of the Subscribers for the ensuing work. But as these turned out beyond expectation numerous, and highly respectable, he was led to apprehend, there might be an imputation by some of a motive less pure. For this reason, he would rather seem to be what his honest wish is, to avoid than appear vain of his friendships and acquaintance. They will therefore, he hopes, take this general method of thanking them, which is so justly due; especially at a time when religious performances at home, seldom meet with due encouragement.

There is a certain distance at which writings, as well as men, should be placed in order to command our attention and respect—Desire of levelling the pride of authorship, is in none more prevalent, than in those who themselves have written.

THE MIRROR.

Hæc perdent religionem Christianam, oblivio beneficiorum ab Evangelio, Securitas, Sapientia Mundi quæ vult omnia redigere in ordinem, et impiis Mediis Ecclesiæ Paci consulere.

LUTHERUS.

In necessariis *unitas*, in non necessariis *libertas*, in utrisque *charitas*, optimo certe loco essent res nostræ. Ita fiat! inquit  
CONR. BERGIUS.

Vultis ne me otiosum a Domino apprehendi?

CALVINUS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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**H**AVING, some few years ago, endeavoured to give a just and plain sense to our English version of *The History of Coriyl*, by blending the narratives of each of the Evangelists, so as one might with ease help to expound another; from the acceptance of that work among those whom I was early called of God to minister, and whom I have now served upwards of forty years, it occurred to me, that after a similar manner, by brief illustrative words, marginal notes, and practical reflections, the same beloved People, even after my decease, might be forwarded in their religious knowledge; and possibly others too, by whom truth and pious virtue are sought after more than the support of faction, and under the heart-felt power of an end-  
less life.

Hence in the main has proceeded this other arduous work and not from a sanguine hope of more, as to this world, than may simply defray an unavoidable expence. To collect from what has been voluminously written, and to condense various digressions into small, yet intelligible bounds, is not an exercise of haste, even where there may be some degree of parts. What appears easy after being over, often requires invention and diligence to set on foot, to execute. The Reflections are specially meant for the aid of young and tender minds. Perhaps too, those of more advanced years may among them find some both new and beneficial; and therefore, I am glad to have these and the Text adjoined.

One would humbly conceive, that no sincere follower of *Jesus*, but must read the *Apostolical Acts* with pleasure, and be much affected likewise, with the accounts given, along with these of the primitive Christian professors. If an impression of true faith accompanies such perusal, a similar zeal for virtue will soon become obvious; and the more that believers are animated with humility, patience, meekness, sobriety, beneficence, peace and freedom, the more will opposition cease to the belt of all principles; the more will mankind flourish; the more

certain evidence will they possess of final and everlasting enjoyment. No other argument now is wanted to support the gospel. An infidel's strongest hold is the careless and perverse lives of such as value themselves upon a purer belief; and may they, through the help of better examples, be able soon and for ever to beat him out of this.

A learned author \*, than whom few have deserved better of the Christian world, has fixed the date of our sacred Book to the year of our blessed Lord 64; and has supported his opinion, by various convincing arguments. Being the only one of its kind, numbers of ancient writers, who were believers, did cite from and enlarge upon its admirable excellence.

Tertullian (A. D. 200) speaks of the advantage derived from St. Luke's history, in shewing how Christ fulfilled the promise of the Holy Ghost to his disciples.

Jerome (A. D. 395) in one of his letters says, "That though this part of the sacred Canon seems to indicate only a bare history, and an account of the early state of the Christian church; yet, if we consider that the writer is Luke the physician, we shall at the same time discern that every word is suited to heal the maladies of the soul."

Augustin (A. D. 395) is yet more full: "Luke, after having written a gospel, containing a history of Christ's words and works, to the time of his resurrection and ascension, wrote such an account of the Acts of the Apostles as he judged to be sufficient for the edification of believers. And it is the only history of the apostles, which has been received by the church; all others having been rejected, as not to be relied upon."

Chrysostom (A. D. 398) ascribes this book very often to St. Luke, and in one of his homilies shews from it the fulfilment of Christ's promise recorded in John xiv. 12. where he says, are narrated many miracles of the apostles, but not all, nor of all Christ's apostles, but of some only. He praises the excellent and admirable Luke, for entitling his book the *Acts*, and not the *Miracles* of the apostles. There still exist no less than fifty-five short discourses of his, upon this part of our sacred scriptures. In one of them he urges, it may be as useful to us as the gospels, in as much as it contains in it excellent principles and many miracles, as well as great examples; for which reasons, it deserves our attentive perusal and careful consideration. "From thence alone, says he, is it to be known how the Christian religion was planted in the world." And elsewhere, "the apostolical discourses in the Acts, record little about Christ's divinity; but chiefly of his humanity, and pas-

\* Dr. Nathaniel Lardner, vol. I. of his Supplement, p. 294.

sion, and resurrection, and ascension ; because these were the points necessary to be proved and believed at that time "

He understands the apostle in 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19 to have spoken of St. Luke ; and from the miracles and gifts of the spirit so common then, argues for his undoubted inspiration. Again, " St. Luke, he observes, and very oratorically, leaves us thirsting for more ; but if he had proceeded, it would have been only a repetition of like discourses and works, like dangers, difficulties, and sufferings."

" Though other Christians might have the same name, says that last cited eminent father of the church, St. Paul chose, on that account, to distinguish him by his profession, Col. iv. 14. *Luke the beloved physician.*" He much commends the closeness of his attendance on the apostle Paul, from 2 Tim iv. 11. He blames those to whom his book of the Acts is unknown, and yet more those who despise it, because clear and easy. " The gospels were soon spread abroad, says he, and came into all men's hands ; but other books of the New Testament were not thought to be so important ; and therefore, had, in comparison, few transcribers." In fine, " the gospels, says he, are the history of things which Christ did and spake ; the Acts, the things which another paraclet spake and did."

Perhaps nothing is more observable than the brevity and conciseness of our sacred book, wherein so much is contained, and yet of necessity many things must have been omitted. One circumstance we may yet notice, that, except in the beginning of his history, he is next to silent about any other apostle than St. Paul. We may wish for more, but should be thankful for what the wise love of God has seen to be the most fit. Without much ceremony, he breaks off his account of St. Peter, Acts xii. 17. ; next of St. Barnabas, chap. xv. 39. and finally, of his dear and close companion St. Paul, xxviii. 31. Such abruptness of manner, argues him to have been far above flattering praise, or exaggerating. His view was not to write the lives of either ; but to record the evidences of Christ's resurrection, and to write a history of the first preaching and planting the Christian religion in the world. All which he hath most admirably executed.

A regard to brevity, which was most proper, induced him to omit a multitude of particulars, which yet are clearly referred to in St. Paul's epistles, and of which, his companion and fellow labourer could not be ignorant, comp. Acts xxii. 17. 2 Cor xi. 23, &c. Rom. xvi. 17. One peculiarly dangerous attempt upon his favourite apostle's liberty and life, and with which himself was much affected, is mentioned with great solemnity, 2 Cor. xii. 31, &c. And the history of it may be seen,

Acts ix. 23, &c. A circumstance to be reflected on with great delight.

From the pleadings of St. Paul before Felix, Festus and Agrippa, the historian Luke has left us to conclude what was the tenor also of his apology, before the emperor Nero himself; before whom most undoubtedly he did appear, Acts xxv. 10, 11, 12, 21. xxvi. 32. xxvii. 24. xxviii. 9.

From Rom. i. 11. xv. 29. compared with Acts xxviii. 13—16. it may be easily and certainly understood, that during the apostle's stay at Rome, there was a very delightful communication of civil and religious offices between him and the brethren, according to the abilities and exigences of each.

Almighty God grant, that these sacred books of the Gospels and the Acts, may be universally attended to, diligently read and studied, to the increase of Christian wisdom, faith, obedience and comfort; so as the divine truths contained in them, may issue in the present and eternal happiness of men. Amen.

AIR, JUNE, 1792.

# A C T S

## O F T H E

# A P O S T L E S.

### C H A P. I.

#### S E C T. I. F R O M V E R S E I.

**T**HE former *(a)* historical treatise<sup>a</sup> have I lately made, and inscribed to thee, O Theophilus, of all the most considerable things that Jesus began *(b)* both to do and to teach *(c)*, and how, from the time of his first public appearance, they were accomplished by him, until the very day in which he was taken *(d)* up from earth to heaven, after that he, through special direction of the Holy Ghost, had given new *(e)* commandments unto the apostles whom he had before chosen as his prime ministers: to whom also, in order to qualify them better *(f)*, he

*(a)* Viz. that of the gospel by Luke, see Luke i. 3. or Tract I composed. *(b)* Or that Jesus both did and said, comp. Mark xii. 1. Luke iii. 8. A short description of the gospel. *(c)* Comp. Matth. iv. 1. v. 17, 20. miracles and doctrines are therein comprehended, *(d)* See Mark xvi. 19. referring clearly to Luke xxiv. 50. *(e)* Enlargements probably upon Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Luke xxiv. 47, 48, 49. Acts xiv. 8. comp. John xx. 21, 22, 23. 2 Tim. i. 1. ; or injunctions to the apostles whom he had elected by the Holy Spirit ; what they should do after receiving the Holy Ghost. *(f)* See

#### R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> Godly treatises open the mind, and engrave upon men's hearts the knowledge of divine truths. In this of St. Luke is contained all the most precious treasures of Christ's gospel.

shewed himself alive, after his *severe* passion and death (g), by many infallible proofs that he was raised from the grave, being seen of them in particular, at different times, during the currency of forty days, and speaking as often of the things pertaining to a more complete knowledge of the true gospel method of salvation, under (h) the kingdom of God <sup>b</sup>.

## SECT. II. FROM VERSE IV.

AND being assembled by his appointment, toward the close of that space, not far from where (a) he had been crucified, together with them alone, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem <sup>a</sup> directly, but wait for <sup>b</sup> obtaining the promise (b) of the Spirit made by him of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of

Acts x. 41. or many most evident signs. (g) As by speaking, walking, eating, &c. Luke xxiv. 39, 40, &c. John ix. 19, 27, 40. &c. John i. 1, &c. (h) Comp. Mark xvi. 13, 16, 17, 18. Luke xxiv. 47, 48. See Mat. iii. 2.

(a) See John xxi. 1, 2. (b) Luke xxiv. 49. comp. John xvi.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> The gospel history is much confirmed and enlarged by what did follow after Christ's ascension. The arguments made use of by the apostles are still very proper, and even necessary, to be well understood. If weighed with candour they would be of singular good use to the Jews. The clearest proofs are to be used in cases difficult to be believed. The words and works of Christ comprehend whatever is necessary to salvation. He did not shew himself of a sudden, and just as suddenly withdrew again. How does this serve to confirm our faith and animate our hope? No evidence could rise higher. <sup>c</sup> This kingdom is governed by the word and spirit of Christ upon earth, and becomes perfect in heaven. By the gospel God reigns in men and doth make them kings.

<sup>a</sup> From whence most danger was, the evangelical law behoved to proceed, as one evidence of its superiority to all human opposition. <sup>b</sup> Teachers of religion ought not to enter upon their office illegally and unprepared. The will of the Father and Son are one. Celestial power is requisite still to preach



me (c) again and again. For John <sup>c</sup> truly baptized with (d) water only; but ye, after a far more excellent manner, as suits the noble arduous office I have called you to, shall be baptized with various powerful and beneficial gifts of the Holy (e) Ghost not many days hence. When they, therefore, were thus solemnly come together <sup>d</sup>, they, still in hopes of temporal grandeur, asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou, after all that has happened, at this time of thy glorious conquest over death, and having so clearly demonstrated (f) thy unlimited power (g), restore again, from Roman bondage, the once flourishing (h) kingdom to the posterity of <sup>e</sup> Israel? And, being a curious question moved by vanity, he said unto them, as much as they were able to bear, It is not for you to know the precise <sup>f</sup> times or the seasons for accomplishing such high matters of promise, and which the Father (i), as yet, hath wisely put in to his own power. But, meanwhile, let this suffice for comfort and instruction, ye, my apostolical disciples, shall receive all needful power to support your peculiarly (j) great

12, &c. xiv. 26. (c) John xv. 29. add to the above. (d) Alluding to Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. (e) See Acts ii. 2, &c. comp. John vii. 38, 39. iii. 34. John xi. 2. (f) Comp. Matth. xxviii. 18. (g) See Luke xvii. 20. xix. 11. Dan. vii. 27. Amos ix. 11, 12. The sight of Christ again from the dead revived their old hopes, even after things, to appearance, had been so much against them. (h) Much more extensive than they thought was this kingdom to be, Acts x. 34, 35, 45. What they wished for, in the very best sense, was instantly to begin. Miraculously their prejudices might have been removed, but he chose to accustom them to the calm use of reason, and to be an example how they should treat others. (i) Comp. Mat. xx. 23. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32. So doth he ever refer things unrevealed, or has appointed by his own authority. (j) See Luke

#### REFLECTIONS.

the gospel with advantage, and to sustain oppositions. <sup>c</sup> The certain and quick accomplishment of such a promise became a clear ground of trust as to every thing else. From first principles the gospel did proceed, in a gradual manner, to perfection. <sup>d</sup> Christ would have no ground of variance left among his disciples. <sup>e</sup> It is hard for the best of men to be entirely crucified to the world. <sup>f</sup> A part of truth may be withheld, but at no time contradicted. Christ refuses not in general that

*office*, after that the Holy Ghost is *largely* come down from heaven upon you: and ye shall be *abundantly* qualified witnesses, for converting unto me multitudes of people, both in Jerusalem, and in all the *lesser* cities of Judea, and now in Samaria (*k*) *likewise*, and even <sup>s</sup> unto the uttermost barbarous parts of the (*l*) earth.

### SECT. III. FROM VERSE IX.

AND, when he had spoken these things (*a*), *with some others*, while yet in *high expectation*, they (*b*) beheld him, he, after lifting up his hands and blessing them, was taken up to the throne of the Majesty on high; and a bright cloud (*c*), *erving in place of a chariot*, received him quite out of their sight<sup>a</sup>. And, while they looked steadfastly <sup>b</sup> toward heaven after him, as he thus mira-

xxiv. 48. Mark xvi. 20. (*k*) A country of Palestine, lying between Judea and Galilee, comp. Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 21, 22. Mat. x. 5, 6. xxviii. 19. (*l*) See Psal. ii. 8.

(*a*) Comp. Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 17. Luke xxiv. 47. (*b*) See Luke xxiv. 50. 2 Kings ii. 11, &c. (*c*) Or, a cloud at length interposing between him and them. How sweet a manner? compared

### REFLECTIONS.

he was to *restore Israel*; but, in their sense, he gives them no just grounds to expect this. People's capacities are to be considered. It behoveth every one to be chiefly intent upon his own duties and office. Gradual instruction is the most certain, as in the late case of our Lord's rising from the dead, and now the nature of his spiritual and heavenly kingdom. By the plenteous effusion of the Spirit was the world, in effect, renewed. It is not expedient for men to know things future, nor should they be inquired after. Uncertainty of what shall be hereafter should make us diligent in our duties. <sup>s</sup> Christ came to be a common Saviour. God would have the minds of his people kept in an humble, dependent, resigned frame, leaving all to be determined by infinite wisdom and goodness.

<sup>a</sup> No other way now is Jesus to be beheld but by the eye of faith. Let us send our wishes and souls to heaven, where Christ is, that hereafter we may view him with joy, Rev. i. 7. Luke xxi. 28. May his cause and service be ever dear to us, who still so graciously attends to ours. <sup>b</sup> "The mind for a while is

*culously went up from the earth thither, behold, two angels (d), in the form of men, stood close by them in white (e) shining apparel; which also said, O, ye (f) men of Galilee (g), why stand ye thus wondering and gazing<sup>c</sup> up into heaven, as though even now ye could follow the Master thither, or did expect to see him come down immediately? This same Jesus, which is at present taken up from abiding in company and converse with you, into heaven to be glorified there, and to manage the affairs of his faithful people, shall so come, in like visible manner, though with a more illustrious retinue of celestial attendants (h), as ye have all at this time<sup>d</sup> seen him go into heaven.*

#### SECT. IV. FROM VERSE XII.

**THEN** returned they *whom he had so highly favoured*, unto Jerusalem from the Mount (a) called Olivet, *with exultation of spirit<sup>a</sup>*, which is distant from Jerusalem a *lawful Sabbath-day's journey (b)*. And when they were

with 2 Kings ii. 11, &c. ix. 54, 55. (d) Comp. Luke xxiv. 5. They and all the rest of their order were soon to become subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. (e) Well suited to their heavenly light, and becoming the triumph of Christ. See Mat. xxviii. 2. Mark xvi. 5. Luke xxiv. 4. John xx. 12. Thereby his reception into heaven was clearly ascertained, comp. Dan. xii. 6. (f) Being chiefly from thence, and where Jesus oftenest preached. (g) Predicted Dan. ix. 13. Mat. xxiv. 30. xxvi. 64. Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxi. 27. By this very question the apostles might be sure of what they were, and whence they came. (h) Comp. Mat. xxv. 30. 2 Thess. i. 7, &c. John x. iv. 1. &c. 1 Thess. iv. 14. &c.

(a) Where he had sorrowed so much, Luke xxi. 39. (b) About

#### REFLECTIONS.

“confounded with any strange unexpected event.” *Lact.* It is hard to abstract one’s self from those they love exceedingly. <sup>c</sup> Unprofitable amazement and grief should yield to the duties of our vocation. Friendly words assuage sorrow, and are congenial to heaven. <sup>d</sup> They who would not acknowledge Christ Jesus as a Saviour, in the end shall feel him as a judge. Then will he be seen of all, and in great glory. Such was now the infant state of the church. Says Lactantius, A cloud and whirlwind enveloped him, and caught him up from the sight of men to heaven.

<sup>a</sup> The number of witnesses were sufficient, their manners

come in (c) *to the city*, they went up into an (d) upper room, where abode, *for some time past*, both (e) Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued, with one accord, in ardent<sup>b</sup> prayer to Almighty God (f), *through Jesus Christ, for those good things given them in promise*, and supplication (g) *for strength in particular to bear what evils they had just cause to look for*, with the (h) women-disciples, *who used from devout love to accompany Christ*, and<sup>c</sup> Mary the mother of Jesus, and with (i) his brethren.

2000 cubits, or a mile and a half. On the other side of that Mount lies Bethany. The whole body of the Jews were not worthy of such a sight. True faith is not to be forced. (c) See verſe 4. Luke xxiv. 49, 52. (d) Comp. Mark xiv. 15. Acts xx. 8. Mat. xiii. 31. (e) The order of the names is ſomewhat different in Mat. x. 2, 3. comp. Luke vi. 15, 16. Jude 1. Such a room many of the richer and more devout Jews had for religious worſhip. (f) See John xvi. 23, 24. (g) Comp. Eph. vi. 18. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 1. (h) Mat. xxvii. 55, 56. Luke viii. 2, 3. (i) Or near relations, ſee Mat. xii. 56. xiii. 55. John vii. 5.

#### REFLECTIONS.

pure, and they ſuffered much for their teſtimonies. For Elijah's aſcent the Jews had only one witneſs. Thoſe who are ingenious and teachable are fit ſubjects of divine comfort; whereas, they who are otherwiſe diſpoſed will always cavil and make new demands. Comp. Matth. xii. 24. xxviii. 13. Numb. xvi. 41. It belongs not to men to preſcribe rules to the Almighty. In Chriſt's riſing from the dead all that followed afterwards is underſtood, by the apoſtles, to be comprehended, Acts iii. 15. iv. 10 v. 30. x. 40, 41. xiii. 30, 31. xvii. 31. 1 Pet. i. 3 Rom viii. 11 x. 9. 1 Cor. xv. almoſt throughout, 2 Cor. iv. 14. 1 Theſſ. iv. 14, &c Each were confirmed by miraculous apoſtolic works. See Acts ii. comp. Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. John vii. 30. vi. 62. xiv. 2, 3, 16. xv. 26. 1 Pet. iii. 22. No excuſe of infidelity was left to the Jewiſh nation, who had the firſt offers of Chriſt. <sup>b</sup> Sincere prayer is a fountain of unſpeakable bleſſings. He who would make himſelf a proper dwelling for the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be void of all mean cares. Where agreement and concord are not, there Chriſt's church is not. Prayers themſelves will not be accepted without brotherly love. They ought alſo to be inſtant and earneſt. <sup>c</sup> The flock of Jeſus ſeek, in ſubſtance, all one thing.

## SECT. V. FROM VERSE XV.

AND in *some of those days, after Jesus' ascension; while they waited for the promised gift of the Spirit*, Peter, as a president, stood up in the midst of the (a) disciples of Christ when largely met, and said (the <sup>a</sup> number of the persons' (b) names being put together were about an hundred and twenty) men and brethren (c) whom spiritual ties do now more than ever unite, this well known awful passage of scripture must needs have been fulfilled <sup>b</sup>, under righteous divine government, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David (d), spake long before concerning Judas, which was, against most solemn and endearing obligations, covenanting guide (e), like Achitophel, to them that took Jesus prisoner. For he was once numbered with us apostles, and had, for a while, obtained part of this our ministry. Now, as you all

(a) Called afterwards Christians, Acts xi. 29. (b) Comp. Rev. iii. 4. xi. 13. Psal. xxxvii. 40. Gen. xlix. 9. over and above the twelve apostles and seventy disciples, it is probable. (c) See Mat. xxiii. 8. The form among the Jews was also used among the politest Greeks. (d) Psal. xli. 9. Now the apostolical knowledge was enlarged, Luke xxiv. 44, 45. John xx. 22. comp. John xiii. 18. : things similar among the Jews were thus expressed, See Mat. i. 22. (e) See Mat. xxvi. 47, 48. Mark xiv. 43, 44. in respect of impiety and ingratitude both, what could be more alike. Their ends too

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Leisure from secular affairs may be happily shared between Christian devotion and converse, Mal. iii. 16. The future edification of the church is a fit subject, and will be owned by the Spirit. <sup>b</sup> The double sense of prophecy appears to be undeniable. The Spirit dictated words which should apply higher afterwards than to the immediate subject in hand. A faithful shepherd earnestly desires the increase of Christ's flock. A true church consultation ought to be in the use of scripture and prayer, rather than human policy. Social religion is the will of God, and always has been the practice of his people, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, &c. xxvii. 4. lxiii. 1, &c. Heb. x. 25. Rom. xv. 6. Acts ii. 1, 41. ix. 31. xi. 26. 2 Cor. viii. 1. Gal. i. 1. Great and precious promises are made to it by our Father in heaven. This preserves true religion, and secures the happi-

*know*, this *unhappy* man purchased (*f*), *in effect*, a field with the *sad* (*g*) reward of his *base* iniquity<sup>c</sup>; and falling headlong *in great force* from where he had desperately hanged himself, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was quickly known<sup>d</sup> to most of all the dwellers in Jerusalem; inso-much as that field, *near to the capital*, is called, in their proper tongue (*h*), *Aceldama*, that is to say, *being interpreted*, The field of purchase by (*i*) blood. For it is written *besides*, in the book of Psalms (*k*), and may well be accommodated to the same dismal subject, Let his habitation be (*l*) desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, his bishopric (*m*) let another take up in his stead. Wherefore<sup>e</sup>, of these (*n*) men which have familiarly companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in (*o*) and out among us *ministering*, beginning from the time of his having submitted to the baptism of John, and soon after (*p*) which he entered upon his public

were similar. (*f*) Or became the occasion of purchasing. (*g*) Comp. Mat. xxvi. 15, xxvii. 7. 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Psal. vii. 14. Judas might have hanged himself on the temple wall, immediately above an immense precipice. A discovery of him hanging would have been more than a balance to the calumnies raised from his betraying. Some interpret this, his choking and bursting from grief. (*h*) Or language, Hebrew Chaldaic, Hakel-dama. Most likely this verse containeth the words of St. Luke the historian, and should be read in a parenthesis. (*i*) Or murder. (*j*) Psal. lxix. 25. cix. 8. let, or shall be. (*k*) Comp. Luke xiii. 35. mention. (*l*) Inspection or overseership. (*m*) The number 12, answerable to the Jewish tribes, behoved to be kept up. (*n*) A Hebrew phrase for intimate conversation and doing common duties, Deut. xxviii. 6. Psal. cxxi. 8. Zech. viii. 10. Acts ix. 28. (*o*) See Mat. iv. 12, 17, &c. Mark i. 14, &c. comp. John iii. 32, &c. xv. 27. (*p*) The chief business of an apostle, and the chief article of faith, as compre-

#### REFLECTIONS.

ness of mankind. <sup>c</sup> Behold the severe but just revenge of God against betraying covetousness. The vices of particular persons should not bring any prejudice against a good cause. No dignity of office can secure from guilt, and the most awful vengeance awaits such. Prov. xi. 4. It is dreadful to bring an odium upon sacred concerns. <sup>d</sup> Superstitious scrupulosity causeth guilt very often to be well known. <sup>e</sup> The flock of

office, unto that same late and ever memorable day that he was taken up hence from us to the Father, must one forthwith be ordained to be a sure witness of his (q) resurrection from the dead, which did eminently seal the truth of his whole admirable doctrine. And they, assenting to such wise proposal (r), appointed two out of the seventy who were most distinguished from the rest, yet nearly equal (s), Joseph, called also (t) Barsabas, who, from his upright living, was surnamed (u) Justus, and (x) Matthias. And they prayed (y) with great solemnity, leaving the choice to him who is perfect in knowledge, and said, Thou, Lord, Jesus, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, which likewise (z) knowest the hearts of all men<sup>t</sup>, shew whether of these, from being best qualified, thou hast chosen, in thyself, to the arduous honourable office, that he may take part with us of this vacated ministry and apostleship, from which miserable Judas by transgression fell, that he might go (a) away to his own best suited<sup>s</sup> place for punishment. And, after prayer,

hending his doctrine, actions, and death. (q) Or set up. (r) Perhaps the brother of James the Less, and Thaddeus, Mat. xiii. 55. Mark xv. 40.; or he might be the same as in Mat. xxvii. 56. Mark vi. 3. (s) According to some, the Son of an oath; others of conversion: others, of rest or quiet: a man remarkably free and upright. (t) Whence the Roman word, justitia, or justice, Col. iv. 11. (u) Heb. gift of God. He might be the same with Nathaniel, John i. 47: both have the like meaning. (x) Comp. John xvii. 18. xx. 21. Gal. i. 4. (y) See John ii. 24, 25. vi. 64. Rev. ii. 23. comp. Jer. xvii. 10. (z) Expresses the event, comp. John xvii. 12. It was a maxim among the Jews, "he that betrayeth an Israelite shall have no part in the world to come," *Light-foot*. Comp. Mat. xxvi. 24. John. vi. 70, 71. (a) See Lev. xvi. 8.

## REFLECTIONS.

Christ should be allowed to suffer as little as may be by the indiscretion of one or other of its shepherds. <sup>t</sup> Men who judge by what they see or hear may be deceived. From the worst kinds of evil much good may be produced. We ought ever to do our best and leave the issues to God. In the choice of spiritual guides we must not lean to human affections. <sup>s</sup> Certain solemn appeals to Providence are highly instructive, Jer. iii. 15. This should be owned even in what appears most casual. Prov. xvi. 33.

they gave forth their lots (*b*), *with both inscribed names* : and the lot *drawn* fell upon Matthias ; and, *with the consent of all who were present, from that time forward*, he was numbered with the *other* eleven (*c*) apostles.

## C H A P. II

### S E C T. VI. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND when the day of (*a*) Pentecost was fully come, they, *of the apostolical order*, were all *affectionately met*<sup>a</sup>, with one (*b*) accord in one place, *for religious exercises*. And suddenly there came a sound *of strange nature* from (*c*) heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled (*d*) *with sensible effects* all in that room of the house where they were sitting. And there appeared *likewise, just on the back of this*, unto them *a number of* (*e*) cloven tongues, *with various points*, like as of *lambent* (*f*) fire ; and it *was so ordered that one*

Josh. vii. 13, 16, &c. 1 Sam. iv. 41, &c. x. 25, &c. Prov. xvi. 33. 1 Chron. xxiv. 1, &c. (*b*) Though the last named, and possibly least considerable with men, he was not so with the Lord. Barabas, though not chosen, might be appointed to some eminent office, as in Acts xi. 24. xiii. 2. xiv. 2, 14. (*c*) See Mat. xxviii. 16. Mark xvi. 14.

(*a*) Fifty from the Passover ; famous for first fruits of the bread, for promulgation of the Law, and now that of the New Covenant, see Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. ; comp. Luke ii. 21. Jer. xxv. 12. Exod. xix. 1, 11. Numb. xxviii. 6. In summer the concourse must have been great. (*b*) Comp. chap. i. 14, 15. (*c*) Not like those from earth or water, prefigured John xx. 22. ; comp. Gen. iii. 8. (*d*) Prefage of future gospel success over the whole earth. Heb. iv. 12, 2 Kings iii. 14, 15. ; calm signs compared with Ex. xix. 16. &c. Heb. xii. 18, &c. All before this were shadows of better things to come. (*e*) What had divided the world before was now to conciliate its inhabitants. 1 Cor. xii. 13. They were to be made one in Christ, Eph. ii. 19, &c. (*f*) Comp. 1 Cor. v. 24. They spoke the mysteries of the gospel kingdom, through, and with such energy, as to inflame

### R E F L E C T I O N.

<sup>a</sup> God promises his gifts to unity.



*of these sat down, for a time, upon each of them (g) : and, agreeably to the above symbolical signs, they were all completely filled (h) with the power of the Holy Ghost, to become eminently wise and good, and to work miracles ; and, from that day in particular, they began <sup>b</sup> to speak, in clear and fervent manner, with other tongues, besides their own mother one (i), even as the Spirit from*

their minds to true faith and piety, see Mat. iii. 11. Hence they should have known John to be a true prophet. (g) The whole 120, chap. i. 15. ii. 18. xi. 15. To be ever with them in strange countries. (h) See Acts i. 17, 18. Whence more than apostles appear to have been thus honoured, see Mat. iii. 16. Now was Christ in possession of his kingdom, Acts i. 5. Eph. iv. 8. Mark xvi. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 30. ; comp. Luke i. 41, 42, 67. (i) They might often,

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> An invincible argument of the majesty of Christ in heaven, and of the divinity of his gospel. The apostles were principally concerned, chap. i. 26. ii. 14. comp. John xiv. 16. xv. 26. xvi. 7. Acts i. 5. The gift was derived from them by imposition of hands. All who hope to be saved must implicitly rely upon apostolical teaching. The communications even to them were gradual, comp. Acts x. 11, 15. 1 Cor. xv. 51. They expected the Holy Ghost, and that as an evidence of Christ's exaltation. When obtained they certainly knew of it from consciousness; comp. John xiv. 25. 26. xvi. 12, 13. : miracles, its effects, were demonstrative of it to others. The old law was given on stone ; the new, on faithful believing hearts, knit together in unity. In minds well occupied the divine Spirit chooses to dwell. His gifts were various and had an immediate power. The spreading of the gospel was to be one of its chief evidences. A burning tongue, upon spiritual heavenly subjects, ravisheth. God dealeth to each as he thinks good ; and all are to be accountable for what they receive in trust. Difference of gifts should lead to mutual endearments and aid. Concord and unity mark the true church. The new law was given from Mount Zion, with a glory, mild, gentle, and familiar. By this time the divine presence had left the temple. By a manner sensible and visible the mind is strongly affected. Knowledge, purity of doctrine, and energy, did consume human dross, and left a blessed refinement, comp. Is. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28. John vii. 39. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Love with zeal are the best fruits of the Spirit, and specially adapted to successful ministrations.

*above gave them ready utterance. And there were, together with people dwelling constantly at Jerufalem, Jews, and converted (j) devout men out of every known nation (k) almost under heaven, then assembled to worship.*

## SECT. VII. FROM VERSE VI.

NOW when this *miracle, from what had happened in the house, with its subsequent extraordinary effects (a)*, was noised abroad, the multitude of *different ranks, soon came together wherever the apostles taught, and were (b) confounded in their minds, because that every man present, though of different nations, heard them who were unlearned, ipeak, orderly and by turns, in his own proper language. And they were all amazed, and even marvelled exceedingly<sup>a</sup>, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these, which we hear speak, of one country, and the greater part of them well known to be Galileans of no extensive education? And how then hear we every man from them a regular address in our own (c) tongue, made use of by the cities and nations wherein we were born (d)? Parthians and (e) Medes, and Persian (f) Elamites, and the dwellers in (g) Mesopotamia, though*

*if not always, have the motions to this, comp. Acts x. 46. xix. 6. iii. 16. (j) Comp. Luke ii. 25. Such would be very cautious how they did believe and receive, John xiii. 47. xii. 20. 1 Kings viii. 41. (k) A hyperbole for vast multitudes. How well attested then must this miracle have been?*

*(a) See verse 2, Jer. x. 22. Ex. iv. 8. (b) Comp. verse 7 12. Acts xix. 29. 32. 1 Cor. xiv. 23 27, 40. (c) Language and even dialect. (d) Bordering upon Persia, who revolted from the kings of Syria and became a powerful nation. (e) People of Asia, who, after the division of the Assyrian empire, and before Persia, were very powerful. (f) From Elam, son of Sem, Gen. x. 22. Isa. xxi. 2, Jer. xxv. 25. (g) Betwixt the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, now Diarber, in Asiatic Turkey; called also, in the Old Testa-*

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Men attain not to such a treasure of knowledge, and to such readiness in speaking so many tongues, by the help of the best education, the greatest genius, and a life spent in long,

*of Jewish belief, and in (b) Judea more generally, and (i) Cappadocia, in (j) Pontus, and (k) Asia, (l) Phrygia, and (m) Pamphylia, in (n) Egypt, who do commonly live likewise, and in the parts of (o) Lybia about (p) Cyrene, and strangers of (q) Rome itself, native (r) Jews, and numerous (s) profelytes to their belief (t), Cretes and (u) Arabians, we, of all these encompassing kingdoms, do hear them speak in our own tongues the late (x) wonderful works of Almighty God<sup>b</sup>, by a once crucified but now exalted Jesus; and doctrines, and promises founded upon these, both new and excellent. And they were (y) all amazed, and were in perplexing doubt notwithstanding, for a while, saying one to another, What meaneth this very singular unaccountable thing; and how does any one conceive it will end? Others, who either*

ment, Padan-Aram. (b) Country of Judah's tribe, where Hebrew, with a mixture of Chaldee-Syriac, was spoken, called also Palestine; now a province of Asiatic Turkey. (i) In the neighbourhood of Cilicia, a province of Turkey. (j) Near the Euxine Sea, on the south side, in Lesser Asia. (k) The Lesser; and sometimes called Ionia, whereof Ephesus was the capital; bounded by the Hellespont, Propontis, Bosphorus, and the Euxine Sea, on the north; by Georgia, Armenia, Turcomania, on the east; by Syria and the Levant Sea, upon the south; and by the Archipelago on the west. (l) Where Troy stood. (m) Part of Asia too. The name dignifying all tribes. Now a part of Carmania, subject to the Turks. (n) Where many Jews dwelt. A chief part of Africa, about 600 miles in length, and from 100 to 200 in breadth, from east to west. (o) Called also Africa by the Greeks, south-west of the former. (p) Near to the Egyptians and Carthaginians. (q) Head of the world then, and seat of the fourth great monarchy; in Italy. (r) By birth and religion dwelling there. (s) From heathenish religion to that of the Jews, Mat. xxiii. 15. (t) Or, of the island Candia, the largest in the Mediterranean, which divides Europe, Asia, and Africa. (u) Of Asia, the Greater, having Turkey on the north, Persia and the Gulph of Persia on the east, the Indian Ocean on the south, the Red Sea and the Isthmus of Suez on the west. Bordering upon Judea, verse 12. (x) Comp. Luke i. 49. Job. xi. 13. 3 Mac. ver. penult. (y) Or mostly, see

## REFLECTIONS.

close, and laborious study. <sup>b</sup> It is right to search diligently, and desire to learn what we perceive not.

*knew no language save their own, or who, from wicked carelessness of temper, did not attend as they ought to so great a miracle, mocking said<sup>c</sup>, these men, whose jargon you have so much patience to hear, are full, even to the degree of being intoxicated, of new (z) and much fermenting wine.*

#### SECT. VIII. FROM VERSE XIV.

*BUT Peter standing up to be both better seen and heard, with the other eleven Apostles (a), with a firm tone of authority, lifted up his voice, and, in name of the whole illuminated brethren, said unto them who contradicted and blasphemed, Ye<sup>a</sup> men of Judea, and all ye learned in particular that dwell at Jerusalem, be this most assuredly known unto you, and hearken to my*

Amos ix. 13. Joel iii. 18. (z) Or sweet and easily kept in this state. *Plut.*

(a) Now he begins to accomplish, John i. 41.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> It is of the nature of prejudice to be rash, cruel, inconsistent. Words of wise and pious import were not such signs of intoxication as theirs were. There are persons and places, and ages too, who seem to delight in ignorance. Even the prophanely foolish are to be set right by words of meek truth. It is a mark of culpable haste, to find fault with what, at first, may not be distinctly understood. By means of the Spirit, poor unlearned fishermen practised celestial eloquence, rebuked proud Pharisees, confuted subtle and crafty philosophers, and put orators themselves to silence. Nothing is more difficult than to speak before a large company, and those of different conditions and tails. The multitude in all ages are apt to be clamorous.

<sup>a</sup> To conciliate attention, address, when most firm and bold, ought to be after an engaging manner. Of a sudden, from a fisher, Peter is made an orator; a clear and persuasive one. The glory of Christ is best defended by plain scripture testimonies. God will as faithfully perform what is to come, as he hath done what is past. It is the part of a good shepherd to step forth valiantly to defend the honour of Christ and his people, against false and crafty accusations.

words *which follow, with due compofure* <sup>b</sup>: for thefe, my dear friends and colleagues in office, are not drunken, as ye *who laft fpoke do rafhly fuppofe*, feeing it is but the (b) third hour of the day from fun rife <sup>c</sup>, and a religious one too, when fuch a fcan- dal would be truly horrible. But this, admired by fome and reproached by others, is the large fulfilment begun of that great event which was fpo- ken *afortime* by the (c) prophet <sup>d</sup> Joel; and it fhall come to pafs in the laft days (d) of *Jerufalem and of the Jewifh ftate* (faith the Lord God) I will plenteoufly pour out of my Spirit, even like (e) water, to wafh away the pollution of fin, and that upon all human (f) flefh: and your fons and your daughters, by this means, from the heads of Ifrael, fhall of a fudden be enabled to (g) prophe-

(b) About nine of the morning, or that of the earlieft temple prayers. Upon Sabbaths or holidays they were wont, before that hour, to eat nothing, *Jofephus*. The apoftolical difcourfes, moreover, were fublime and coherent. (c) Chap. ii. 28. Or, according to the Hebrew text, iii. 1. A more valid argument than the former, and direct answer to verfe 12. Every thing in revelation, prior to the coming of Chrift, had more or lefs a reference to him, as had like- wife perfons and events, and what was prophesied of them. Joel's words are cited from the LXX. and it may be from memory. (d) Or times of the Teacher of Righteoufnefs, Joel ii. 23. Chrift was the end of the law for righteoufnefs. His days were the completion of it. (e) Comp. If. xlv. 3. John iv. 14. vii. 38, 39. Tit. ii. 6. (f) Or men belonging to God of every rank. *Flefh* natu- rally frail, makes a beautiful contraft here, with divine powerful Spirit; comp. Acts viii. 17. x. 44. xix. 6. It was a maxim with the Jews, that the Divine Majefty dwelleth not with perfons out of Palestine, nor upon any poor. (g) To foreteli and preach, comp.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> False opinions muft firft be removed, to make clear way for truth. <sup>c</sup> Seasons leaft expofed to fhame are chofen by all, fave the inflexibly reprobate, for doing evil, 1 Theff v. 5. At folemn religious feafts, to eat and drink immoderately, would be to the laft degree offensive. <sup>d</sup> The Holy Spirit is the beft interpreter of his own words. What we have here, many of the ancient Jews applied to the days of the Mefiah. It is for every one's profit to be attentive to foun d fcripture doctrine. By prophesy diftant ages are connected together, and perpetual matter for reviving the curiofity of men is provided, from time

fy, and your young men shall see *miraculous* visions *relative to divine things*, by day, and your old men shall by night dream (*b*) *supernatural* dreams: and on my meanest servants as to outward rank, and on my hand-maidens of like condition, I will pour out in those days of my *enriching* Spirit; and they too shall prophesy (*i*) *dreadful things*: and, agreeably to what they declare to those whom no assurances, with proffers of good, do gratefully affect, I will shew wonders <sup>e</sup> of *tremendous vengeance* in heaven (*j*) above, and signs of like tremendous nature, in the earth beneath; no less than forerunners immediate of blood from slaughtered men, and fire of whole cities, fields, and villages, and vapour of smoke from them, far and wide dispersed: The sun itself, by this means among others, shall be turned in many parts of the impenitent Jewish kingdom into dismal darkness, and the moon into an image of blood (*k*), before that great and notable day of the (*l*) Lord shall come to have its entire accomplishment: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever, without any respect of persons <sup>f</sup>, shall religiously (*m*) call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, out of pure faith, and having a good conscience, shall be saved (*n*), even in time, from the weight of those miseries; and more completely and durably beyond death.

Acts xxi. 9. Perhaps not as yet made out, Acts ix. 10. (*b*) Comp. Numb. xii. 6. Acts xvii. 9. (*i*) See note f, Acts v. 32. (*j*) See Luke xxi. 11, &c. All confirmed both by Jewish and heathen testimony. (*k*) See Mat. xxiv. 29. Rev. vi. 12. a description perfectly emblematical of the great day, 2 Pet. iii. 10, &c.: comp. Eccl. xii. 1, 2. Is. xiii. 10 Joel iii. 15. Rev. viii. 12. ix. 2. Ezek. xxxii. 7. (*l*) Rom. x. 12, 13. (*m*) Part for the whole of religion; comp Gen. xii. 28. xiii. 4. xxvi. 25. 1 Chron. xiii. 6. Psal. lxxix. 6. Isa. xli. 25. Jer. x. 25. Acts ix. 24. (*n*) Comp. Luke xxi. 18, 19. Mark xxiv. 16, &c. Ezek. ix. 4, 6.

#### REFLECTIONS.

to time. <sup>e</sup> Arguments of terror should be early used, where there is much danger of offending. The contempt of the Spirit is followed with alarming judgements. That which obtains at last, will be the most severe, 2 Thess. i. 7, &c. 2 Pet. iii. 10, &c.

## SECT. XI. FROM VERSE XXII.

YE men of (a) *Israel's line*, hear these my *following* important words; Jesus, *whom you well know to have come out of Nazareth, where he was long brought up and educated*; a (b) *man whom therefore (c) you did despise, but who was eminently approved, yea recommended of God (d) by various irrefragable testimonies among you all, of miracles. (c) manifold<sup>a</sup>, and wonders, and signs, both of mighty power and love, which God, even the Father, did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also cannot but know: him, being delivered over to human will through the sad treachery of his disciple Judas, and yet by the determinate (f) counsel, and clear foreknowledge of God, ye, of this generation, have taken, and by wicked hands (g) of Roman soldiers, have crucified<sup>b</sup> with public infamy, and slain, as a vile detestable malefactor: whom that same good God (h) hath now raised up, in high honour from the grave, having loosed the (i) pains of death, by which he was brought thither:*

(a) The Jews delighted in this name, and Peter wisely gratifies them; comp. Mat. xxvi. 7. Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. John xviii. 5, 7. (b) Comp. John i. 30. Acts xvii. 31. (c) Mat. ii. 23. John xix. 19. (d) To be the great Messiah, John iii. 2. v. 36.; comp. 1 Thess. i. 5. It is the Hebrew manner to express the same thing by various words; see Elish. ii. 9. 2 Cor. xii. 12. (e) Mat. vii. 22. xiv. 2, &c. Acts vi. 8. Heb. ii. 4. Mat. viii. 27. xii. 23. John vii. 31. v. 19, 36. x. 37, 38. (f) Comp. Luke xxiv. 26: xxii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 2, 20. (g) Or, without law; comp. Mat. xx. 45. Mark xiv. 41. Thus wicked acts were over-ruled to infinite and universal benefit. The enemies of Christ could not have put him to death without divine permission; comp. Mat. xxvi. 53, 54. Luke xxii. 53. (h) A capital point of faith in Christ. (i) Others, cords or bonds; see 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. Psal. xviii. 5, 6. xi. 6, 3. St. Luke follows LXX.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> How much greater and more numerous were the miracles of Jesus than those of Moses? comp. Numb. xvi. 28, 29, 30. <sup>b</sup> He slayeth the man that procureth his death. The miracles of Jesus were blazed abroad throughout all Judea, with the cities and nations bordering thereupon. Divine counsels are both foretold and executed without the least violation of hu-

because <sup>c</sup> it was not possible, *from (j) the wise and equal decree of heaven, that he should be finally holden of it; or, that he should even long remain so.* For, to make it the more credible and of easy apprehension, David, in the book of *(k) Psalms, thus speaketh concerning him: I foresaw the (l) Lord, as my example and aid under sore affliction, always before my face; for he is like one on my right hand, to that purpose, that I should not be moved away from mine integrity, or sink under any trial: therefore, upon such firm confidence, did my heart rejoice; and, out of its fulness, my (m) tongue was made (n) glad (o) with solemn grateful praise: moreover also, my very mortal flesh shall still (p) rest in sure hope of an instant and glorious resurrection.* Because thou, O God most high, wilt not leave my precious *(q) soul in (r) hell, neither wilt thou suffer (s) thine Holy One whom thou delightest in, even after burial, so much as to see (t) bodily corrup-*

*(j)* Comp. Mat. ix. 15. *(k)* Psal. xvi. 8. &c. LXX. *(l)* Comp. Psal. xxv. 15. cix. 29. &c. *(m)* Heb. Glossy, as in Psal. xxx. 12. *(n)* Or exulted. *(o)* The Greek word is proper to one abiding in a tabernacle, or tent, for a short time. Corruption and the worm shall not be able to overcome. *(p)* My life to perish. A part of man, put for the whole; as in Ezek. xvii. 17. xviii. 4. 20. xxii. 27. Acts vii. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 20.; comp. Psal. xxxiii. 19. xlix. 15. lxxxix. 48. *(q)* Grave. Gr. an invisible state; comp. Job vii. 9. Psal. vi. 5. Is. xxxviii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 55. Rev. i. 18. xx. 14. *(r)* Gr. or give. *(s)* Comp. Mark i. 24. *(t)* Or experience;

#### REFLECTIONS.

man freedom. <sup>c</sup> As Christ was without sin, so he could not be kept in any bondage; least of all that of death. It was the will of God that this his beloved should suffer, to the intent that we should be delivered. Whilst suffering bodily pains Christ rejoiced inwardly. Death and hell have no perpetual power, except in those who are subject to sin. After the example of Jesus, let us learn to put our whole trust in Almighty God, who is both mercy and life. He may seem to turn away his countenance for a time, but will return with greater advantage than ever. In none of his promises is it possible for God to lie. Our Lord's resurrection is an undoubted pledge of ours. How transcendent are the riches of grace here! Heb. i. 3. Eph. i. 21, &c.



tion. Thou hast *distinctly* made known to me the ways of *obtaining a blessed and endless* life ; thou shalt, *after my sufferings here are over*, make me full of *heavenly joy with the light of thy (u) countenance*.

## SECT. X. FROM VERSE XXIX.

MEN (a) and brethren, *whom I dearly love (b)*, let me now freely speak unto you of *what my heart dictates concerning the (c) patriarch and noble king David* : that he is both *long since dead (d) from our earth*, and buried, and his sepulchre, *wherein the royal body was laid*, is with us *abiding (e) to this day*. Therefore, being a prophet, *under large celestial influence*, and knowing that God had sworn (f) with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins (g) *by direct lineage*, according to the (h) *bodily flesh*, he would raise up the (i) Christ to sit on his throne (j) *above* : he, *with a firm reliance on the faithfulness of God*, seeing this before, *by divine inspiration*, spake of the resurrection of Christ, *as another self*, that his (k) soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This same Jesus hath Almighty (l) God raised up, *according to promise, on the third day*, whereof we <sup>a</sup> all at present before you are

comp. John viii. 21. Heb. xi. 5 (u) Comp. Psal. xvii. 15. Or presence.

(a) Soothing compellation, when he had to enter upon a painful subject. (b) Or, I may. (c) So heads, or chiefs of families were styled. (d) Gr. finished or ended. (e) Comp. Acts xiii. 36. (f) A Hebrewism, denoting great certainty ; see Luke xxii. 15. 2 Sam. viii. 12, &c. Psal. cxxxii. 11. (g) Comp. Mat. i. 16. (h) Opposed to his supernatural divine conception ; as in Rom. i. 3, 4. iv. 1. ix. 3. 1 Cor. x. 15. 2 Cor. v. 16. Gal. iv. 23, 29 Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. (i) Messiah, or anointed ; after the manner of all kings and priests. (j) Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 12. Eph. i. 20, &c. Psal. cxxxii. 11. (k) See Sect IX. note m. (l) Comp. Gal. i. 1.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The integrity of the apostles could not be attached. Their miraculous gifts were clear, numerous, and beneficent.

(*m*) witnesses by *personal knowledge*. Therefore, being by the *omnipotent* right hand of God exalted *from deep abasement* (*n*) to *supreme honour and dominion*, and having, as his *peculiarly anointed*, received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (*o*), *made afterwards by him to us*, he hath, agreeable to those notices, shed forth (*p*) this *resplendent gift*<sup>b</sup> upon us, which ye now see the evidence of, and hear in various tongues particularly. For David, (*q*) in the manner of our great Lord, is not ascended into the highest heavens: but he plainly saith himself, by an *unerring spirit*, The Lord *Jehovah* said unto my Lord *Messiah*, Sit thou, with distinguished rank and office<sup>c</sup> on my right hand (*r*), until, by an entire victory, I make thy most malicious foes thy footstool, as it were to keep for ever at under. Therefore, upon such clear concurrent evidence, from this time forward, let all posterity, belonging to the house of good old Israel, know assuredly, that God, whom no man hath seen, nor can see and live, hath made

Eph. i. 17, &c. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. (*m*) The twelve especially, Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 8. ii. 32. xiii. 31.; comp. Acts iv. 13. By testimony of all their senses. They had nothing to expect by bearing witness, but hatred, scourgings, imprisonments, and death. (*n*) See John xx. 17. Heb. ii. 9. Phil. ii. 8, &c. (*o*) Comp. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts iv. 5. John vii. 39. xv. 26. Or, the Holy Ghost, which was promised, John xiv. 26. xvi. 13, &c. (*p*) See Tit. iii. 5, 6. Eph. iv. 8. So kings, after their coronations, bestow liberal gifts. (*q*) Comp. Psal. cx. 1. Mat. xxii. 44, 45: (*r*) The Jews, though indirectly, are here threatened. Accommodated by figures

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> A demonstrative proof how very dear Jesus was to God. <sup>c</sup> God so over-ruled prophetic words as to give them a more sublime import than even themselves did comprehend, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. We ought not to set so much by David, great as he was, as to what is due to the Messiah. Christ, as touching his *humanity*, was to be of the lineage and family of David; but *spiritually*, to sit upon his throne and reign for ever. It becomes his disciples, with affection, to take their part in his glory and joy. Likewise, to pray without ceasing, that every opposing power may be brought under him, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27. How effectually doth Christ's resurrection remove the scandal of the cross? See 1 Cor. ii. 8. The sum of saving faith is to believe this.

that same Jesus, whom ye have lately crucified (s), by an invariable constitution, both (t) Lord of angels and men, and his (u) Christ for so glorious a purpose.

# SECT. XI. FROM VERSE XXXVII.

NOW, when they (a) of the Jewish nation heard this affecting doctrine from the apostle Peter, they were pricked (b) with deep sorrowful (c) conviction in their heart, and said unto Peter, on account of their late great crimes, with earnest solicitude, and to the rest of the apostles, Men (d) and dear brethren, what shall we (e), who have been so criminal, do to be saved from our extreme guilt and danger? Then Peter said unto them, There is yet indeed room for mercy: repent of your past aggravated iniquities (f), so as to become new creatures; and, from a lively faith in him whom you did so rashly crucify, be baptized every one of you instantly, in the name of Jesus Christ, as your divinely authorized (g) master, for the remission of sins <sup>b</sup> already past, and ye shall, by way of earnest (h),

to human capacities. (i) This most affecting circumstance kept to the last. What had they now to expect without repentance? comp. Luke xxiv. 26. (r) See Mat. xxviii. 18. comp. John viii. 54. Acts iii. 13. v. 30, 31. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Heb. i. 3. x. 12, 13. (u) Or anointed, Luke iv. 18. Acts, x. 38.

(a) See ver. iv. 5. (b) Or cut; fore afraid, Gen. xxxiv. 7. (c) Comp. Zech. xii. 10. (d) An imitation of his own good manner, ver. 29. (e) Is there yet any hope left for us? (f) Comp. Mat. iii. 2. Luke xxiv. 47. (g) See Mat. xxviii. 19. The Jews were found in the faith of God, and the powers of the Holy Ghost. Consecrate yourselves to Christ and his doctrine; see Gal. v. 3. Acts viii. 37. x. 47, 48. xvi. 31, 32, 33. xix. 4, 5. Mark xvi. 16. Rom. x. 9, 10. Acts xxii. 16. Phil. ii. 12. referring particularly to the opposers and crucifiers of Christ. (h) Comp. Eph. i. 13, 14.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Faithful are the wounds of a friend; comp. Prov. xxvii. 6. xxv. 12. Psal. cxxvi. 5. cxli. 4, 5. The gospel affords a ready, sure, and encouraging answer to lively penitent convictions. To be saved has a claim to the very utmost ardour of our souls. <sup>b</sup> None ought to despair, seeing even the murderers of the

receive, *in common with us, the rich miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, for effectual divine service.* For the (i) promise of that most necessary support and consolation, is, agreeable to the preceding oracle, unto you, the present posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and to your (j) children from them, after you; and, not only so, but to all them (k) of the gentile world that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God, by his effectual preached gospel, shall call (l) to an obedient faith. And with many other words of like conciliatory nature, did he testify the needful truth, and earnestly exhort people of all ranks to be submissive, saying, with an undaunted courage, Save yourselves, with speed and zealous diligence, from conforming to the maxims and practices of this (m) untoward<sup>c</sup>, mad, and prevailing obstinate generation; and perishing dreadfully with them.

Acts xix. 6. (i) Other rich blessings were to come along with this, Jer. 31, 34. Zech. xiii. 1. Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 13. Rom. ix. 4. Eph. ii. 12. Rom. xv. 8. See Acts ii. 14, 15. (j) See Joel ii. 2 8. Deut. xxix. 14, 22. Rev. xvii. 14. John viii. 39. (k) See Eph. ii. 13, 17. Peter's words might be over-ruled to a higher sense than even himself meant, Mat. xxviii. 18. Acts x. 20, 34, 35, 45. xi. 2, 13, 18. See texts under last note. (l) Comp. Rom. i. 6, 7. viii. 28. 1 Cor. i. 2, 24. Jude 1. If. liii. 1. Deut. xxix. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 25. In words signifying kindness, the acceptance of the kindness is to be understood. (m) Comp. verse 19, &c. 13.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Lord Jesus were pardoned upon such reasonable terms. How gracious is the gospel dispensation! Baptism is an outward sign of inward belief. To acknowledge guilt, and dread punishment, is the beginning of a man's salvation: the next thing is to search for a remedy. A sober and meek shepherd exerciseth no tyranny, even by reproachful checks; but declareth to sorrowful hearts, without delay, how they may be forgiven. To believe and trust in God, who made the promise, is the way to receive. True faith must be professed, Rom. i. 16. Eloquence from heaven, is infinitely more powerful than that which is picked out from rhetorical precepts of men. Such was the first cast of the spiritual fisherman's net. <sup>c</sup> Wavering minds ought to be confirmed and forwarded by close and various exhortations. They must be untoward indeed who can despise the wholesome doctrine of Jesus, confirmed by miracles so numerous and beneficent.

SECT. XII. FROM VERSE XLI.

THEN they that, *from a genuine faith*, gladly received the *gospel word, on purpose to adhere to it ever after* (a), were publicly baptized: and the same day there were added unto the number of them *who thus became ready professing disciples*<sup>a</sup>, about three thousand (b) souls. And they of *this visible holy profession*, continued, *amidst numerous and awful dangers*, steadfastly in bearing and improving by means of the (c) apostles doctrine, and in mutual endearing fellowship (d) both civil and religious<sup>b</sup>; and in breaking of bread (e), with

(a) By one or other of the apostles, and in presence of all; see chap. i. 15. comp. verse 47. i. 24. (b) Put for men, or rational beings, by an easy and suitable figure; comp. Luke v. 1c. (c) Comp. Acts i. 14. ii. 46. vi. 4. viii. 13. Rom. xii. 12. xiii. 8. Col. iv. 2. (d) See verse 44, 45. Rom. xii. 13. xv. 26. 2 Cor. viii. 4. iv. 13. or a free distribution, Gal. vi. 6. (e) See Mat. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20, &c. Love feasts, along with this, were early made use of, Tert. c. 39. But soon laid aside, on account of their being abused; comp. 1 Cor. x. 21. Jude 12.

REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> What an honour, to be made the instrument of so much good? Likeness of character, and a perfect harmony of sentiments and views, do closely unite people in their lives. The Spirit of God is not idle, but operates even as fire. We should cherish the childhood of our regeneration in Christ. Preachers ought to have with them, ever ready, all kinds of spiritual food. Those who are to be baptized must be taught the rudiments of religion, and afterwards, more at large; proceeding always to perfection. <sup>b</sup> The primitive church was not burdened with numerous disputable opinions. The sole essential groundwork of faith was, that Jesus, whom the Jews did crucify, was Christ, or Messiah; and that his kingdom was spiritual and eternal. True Christian fellowship imports every kind office, Rom. xii. 6, &c. 1 Thess. v. 14. The memorials of Christ's death are pure, and ought to be received after a pure manner. He hath appointed this for a sacred sign and pledge of his love for us, and of the concord which ought to subsist among Christians. Their duty, therefore, is to examine themselves, and see if

*thanksgiving, to the honour of their common Lord ; and in prayers (f) of all kinds for the progress of his kingdom. And reverential fear (g) came upon every soul who joined not their society : and so much the more that many wonders and signs of power supernatural, were done by the apostles (h) to awaken impenitence and to confirm believers. And all that heartily believed in Jesus<sup>c</sup>, were*

(f) Congregational and private, Acts xxi. 5. with hymns and psalms, Acts i. 24. iv. 24. iii. 1. xvi. 13. (g) Comp. Gen xxxv. 5. Acts v. 5. xi. 13. Luke i. 12. vi. 5. v. 26. vii. 16 (h) See ver. 22.

#### REFLECTIONS.

there be any thing in them contrary to the mind of Jesus Christ ; and, if they have any uncharitable disposition towards their neighbours. Even early divines, by neglecting the scriptures, and mixing the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle with what they knew, changed theology into a science full of controversial peltive subtilties, 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. To be received into communion, there must be competent knowledge, Matth. xxviii. 19. John vi. 45. Heb. viii. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 3. John xvii. 3. ; penitence, Mark i. 15. Matth. iii. 6. ; faith in Christ, John iii. 36. Acts v. 14. ; a sincere fervent love, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Matth. x. 32. Rom. x. 10. James ii. 18. <sup>c</sup> The same faith and concord serve greatly to support and adorn each other. It has been long a proverb, that among friends all things ought to be common. So sudden a change of principles and life must have been very affecting in themselves, and in the method of their accomplishment. That which the celestial Spirit, above all things inspires, is love and concord, the badge of Christian discipleship. The love of Christ, planted in the heart, doth greatly cherish this. Church members should submit cordially to order and discipline, Eph. v. 21. 1 Cor. xi. 22. Matth. xviii. 17. ; likewise devote their gifts, graces, and abilities mutually to serve, 1 Pet. iv. 10. Rom. xii. 6, 7. ; to care, in particular, for their poor relatives, 1 Tim. v. 4, 8, 16. ; to withdraw, if need be, in the most gentle manner, Rom. xiv. 5, 23. 1 Tim. iii. 3, &c. ; to study peace, purity, and edification, Rom. xiv. 19. Col. iii. 15. Heb. xii. 14. Eph. iii. 17. ; to improve their principles, Heb. 5, 12. Col. iii. 16. Acts xvii. 11. John v. 39. ; To maintain the rights of conscience against all impositions, Gal. v. 1, 13. ; yet with prudent meek love, 2 Cor. x. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Jude 3. 1 John iv. 1. Col. ii. 4, 8. Phil. i. 27. Psal. cxxii. 6. Is. lxii. 7. However extensive community of

together often by mutual agreement, and had all (i) lawful things to be used in common; and certain of them (j) sold their <sup>a</sup> land-possessions and moveable goods, and cheerfully parted them, by wise proportions, to all men of their own principles, as every man had particular need. And they, continuing daily with other Jewish worshippers and one cheerful accord in the temple (k), at stated devotional hours, and breaking (l) bread from house to house in private among themselves, did eat their meat with peculiar gladness and most engaging (m) singleness of heart; praising the powerful goodness of the one

(i) Those who came at a distance, for public worship and instruction, behoved, many of them, to receive charitable supplies; see chap. iv. 32. v. 4. xii. 12. Now the situation of things are greatly altered. Some philosophers and Jewish sects did thus likewise distinguish themselves. *Gellius*. l. i. c. 9. *Philo Josephus* (j) *Comp. Syr.* xxviii. 27. xxxvi. 25. Where no such necessity is, the obligation ceases. (k) See *Mat.* xxi. 13. *Acts* iii. 1. (l) Their converse, at the time, was spiritual. They were sincere; of good faith, and communicative, *Eph.* vi. 5. *Col.* iii. 22. *2 Cor.* ix. 13. This, among the Jews, imported every thing convivial, *Is.* lviii. 7. (m) See *Rom.* xii. 8. *2 Cor.* i. 12. *Comp. Gen.* xx. 15. *1 Kings* ix. 5.

#### REFLECTIONS.

goods might be in the apostles' days, this can now be extended no farther than to the privileges and possessions which the church enjoys as a body; and to which they have a joint equal right, *Gal.* iii. 28. *Acts* vi. 17. *1 Cor.* xii. 26. Incredibility is best subdued by kind Christian works. <sup>a</sup> To become a Christian, it is by no means necessary to give away a persons whole wealth; comp. *Luke* xxiii. 51. *John* xix. 38. *Luke* viii. 2, 3. *Acts* ix. 36, 43. *Rom.* xvi. 23. *Acts* xi. 28, 29. xxiv. 17. *Rom.* xv. 25, &c. *1 Cor.* xvi. 1, &c. Liberality is all that is requisite; *1 Tim.* xvi. 18, &c. *2 Cor.* ix. 7. *Comp. 1 Cor.* vi. 10. *Eph.* iv. 28. *1 Thess.* iv. 11. *2 Thess.* iii. 12. *1 Tim.* v. 8. Alms ought, as much as possible, to be proportioned to the necessities of the poor; *Luke* xii. 33. Where each man is content with a little, there will be scarce any lack of things needful. Charity doth more, without compulsion, than any law whatever doth require. How glorious an earnest of the future success of the gospel! yea, how convincing, to all subsequent ages! Hearts sweetly opened unto God, feel placid, benevolent, and

*supreme God, and having favour with (n) all the candid part of the Jewish<sup>e</sup> people. And the Lord (o) Jesus Christ added<sup>f</sup> to the number of his professing church daily, such as became penitent upon pure principles of (p) faith, and should thereby be saved everlastingly.*

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## CHAP. III

### SECT. XIII. FROM VERSE I.

**N**OW, *about that time*, Peter and John (a) went up together into the temple (b), *according to the* Prov. xi. 3. xxviii. 6. (n) Comp. Exod. xi. 3. xii. 36. (o) Verse 36. (p) See verse xxi. 4c.

(a) See chap. i. 15. ii. 1, 44. (b) Not yet abolished, even with

### REFLECTIONS.

liberal; Zech. xiv. 7. <sup>e</sup> During twenty five years, and until the beginning of the reign of the emperor Nero, the apostles, with some measure of peace, occupied themselves in laying the foundation of the church, in every province and city. *Lactantius*. A faithful and steadfast temple unto the Lord, is built up, by turning many to the true religion; *ibid.* comp. 1 Pet. ii. 3, &c. Great is the power of goodness, modesty, and patience, even upon them that are without. They who will not imitate virtue, must esteem, as well as revere it. Who is he that would not love such as do not hurt, and are ready to do every one good? There cannot but be joy and gladness, where there is a clean conscience; and without any distrust of promises, which are made in the gospel. Such joy is more than words can express. <sup>f</sup> No person should be forced to enter into Christian fellowship; nor violent authority used, to keep them together. We hear not, as yet, of Jewish Scribes, Pharisees, and other heads among those converts. Considering how inveterate one sect and party are generally against another, how commonly they all join to crush a rising sect, and how much hated and despised the name of Jesus was at Jerusalem; it argued the care of a watchful and extraordinary providence over Christians, that they were not, as yet attacked. The mode and forms of worship, should be as plain and scriptural as possible. Though we cannot be one in judgement, we may be one, in condescension and love; Eph. iv. 3, &c. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. ix. 13.



*law, at the stated hour of public prayer, being, by agreement of the elders, the (c) ninth hour <sup>a</sup> after sun rising. And a certain well known man, whom no human help could avail, being lame from his mother's womb, was carried of his nearest friends; whom they of design to work upon the compassion of the worshippers, laid daily at the gate of the temple (d) which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing, among others, Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, much affected, fastening his eyes <sup>b</sup> upon him, with John, said, by a divine impulse to encourage his hope, Look on us. And accordingly he gave close heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them for subsistence, worthy of such attention. Then Peter said, Silver and gold (e) of private property, have I none; but such as I have in trust, and will prove yet more beneficial, give I now unto thee: In the authoritative (f) name of the late despised*

respect to rituals, chap. ii. 46. (c) The morning hour was the third, or our nine; mid-day, our twelve; the ninth hour, three afternoon; comp. Exod. xxix. 39. Psal. lv. 18. Dan. ix. 21. Luke i. 10. Acts x. 30. A like division was long continued in the Christian church. Part. (d) it belonged to the outer court, or that of the gentiles; was built by Herod, and covered over with Corinthian brass, not much inferior to gold. Jos. Bel. Ind l. 6. c. 6. l. 7. c. 12. (e) What belonged to others, and was set apart for different use, he had no right to dispose of. See chap. ii. 45. iv. 34. 35. (f) Or power; comp. chap. iv. 7, 10, 30. iii. 16. ix. 3, 4. Mark. xvi. 18.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The devout are often best employed, when others abandon themselves to sensual ease and mirth. By the relief of a single person from misery, it sometimes, as here, happens that great numbers are benefited. Beggary is not without its shifts. <sup>b</sup> Those who enter into the Temple, should be disposed to give their alms with good will. Souls piously formed, do welcome both public and private occasions. Friendship is much endeared by a temper of this sort, Psal. lv. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 8. There are scarce any, whose circumstances will forbid every exercise of kindness. They seek not to enrich themselves, who would be approved as faithful stewards. The worth of pastors, must not

Jesus Christ of Nazareth <sup>c</sup> rise up to the full enjoyment of vigorous health, and walk home to thy friends. And forthwith he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his late lame feet and weak ankle-bones received complete strength. And he, leaping up with agility, stood, as one astonished, for a short space, and then walked about; and, under fervours of gratitude, he entered with them into the temple (g), walking cheerfully, and leaping, and praising the great unexpected goodness of Almighty God. And all the surrounding people saw him thus joyfully walking and praising God aloud; and they knew, without a doubt, that it was he which, so long till then, sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the <sup>d</sup> temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that strange alteration which had happened unto him. And, as the lame man which was healed held fast the beloved instruments of his restoration (h) Peter and John, as unwilling to part with them, all the people, who had been witnesses, or whom report did similarly affect, ran in crowds together unto them in the other spacious (i) porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering, both at the cure and the beneficent authors of it.

(g) Fulfilling, 1<sup>st</sup> xxxv. 6. (h) Comp. Luke iv. 42. He might fear, perhaps, that he would lose the use of his limbs again, if he parted with them; or could scarce yet, for joy, believe his own sense and experience. (i) Or portico; see John x. 23. comp. 1 Chron. xxvi. 16. 1 Kings x. 5. xi. 13.

#### REFLECTIONS.

be measured by their wealth. <sup>c</sup> It affords double delight to heal souls by bodily advantages; and both are best done, in the name of Christ. Some countenances seem to have an expression of liberality in them. A pleasing eye, with comfortable voice, cheers the necessitous. <sup>d</sup> To hide the benefits of God, is the disposition of an unthankful person; and to ascribe the same to men, is a proof of much impiety. Thankful acknowledgements are necessary, sweet and profitable. Ministers of Jesus should watch every opportunity for doing good, with zeal and prudence.

## SECT. XIV. FROM VERSE XII.

AND when Peter saw it *so properly thought of*, he answered (a) unto *this conduct* of the numerous people as follows, Ye (b) men of Israel (c), why marvel ye at this *cure as new, who have seen and heard of so many?* Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own *independent power* (d) or *peculiarly deserving* <sup>a</sup> holiness we had made this *late lame man* to walk? The *most high* (e) God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of *these* our eminent fathers <sup>b</sup>, and every other descending from them hath <sup>c</sup> glorified with *celestial honour and dignity*, his beloved <sup>d</sup> Son (f) Jesus; whom

(a) Or thus spake unto them. (b) Descendants from old Jacob. (c) The thing itself was admirable, and no less the cause of it. (d) They sought not their own, but the glory of their Lord; see verie 15, 16. (e) Their great and glorious benefactor, Exod. iii. 6, 16. (f) Comp. Mat. iii. 17. xiii. 18. Acts iv. 25. Psal. ii. 7. lxxxii. 6. John viii. 54 Heb. i. 4, 5. Acts ii. 33. xiii. 27. John ii. 11.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Miracles ascribed unto saints, on account of their real or supposed holiness, is idolatrous. Happy Ministers, who, like the apostles, are ever intent upon opportunities of doing good; and who, notwithstanding, arrogate to themselves nothing. <sup>b</sup> Christ, while on earth, was extremely poor, that men might become familiar with him; and this they abused. Whom malice overthrows, almighty love doth often eminently exalt. A murderer was preferred by Jewish rulers to Jesus, who brought with him life to all men. <sup>c</sup> Here is an appeal for Christ's resurrection, to all the Jewish people; and most obvious proof, at the same time, that there is no hope for salvation, save through him alone. God, in the end, will rectify all seeming irregularities; and make the cause of righteousness and truth for ever triumphant. The apostles taught no new religion, inconsistent with the Mosaic. Human passion and guilt is often over-ruled, to answer the best ends; comp. Gen. xlv. 5. l. 20. Il. x. 5, 6. <sup>d</sup> The foundation of recovery, must be laid in a deep sense of sin. Even great offenders are to be treated with respect, and honest alleviating tenderness. Crimes are aggravated by the greatness of those a-

ye of chief rank, with (g) cruel ungrateful haste, delivered up, and denied him (h) contemptuously in the presence of Pontius Pilate to be your king, when (i), because there was no fault in him, he was, though a heathen, determined to let him go. But ye, much better taught, and earliest preferred to the offers of unspeakably rich and manifold blessings by the Messiah, denied, with obstinate firmness, the (j) holy One and <sup>e</sup> the just, and, in the height of your clamorous rage, desired the deliverance of a most pestive (k) murderer, by way of favour, to be granted unto you; and so, in effect, killed, yourselves, the great Prince of (l) Life, whom God hath since, notwithstanding, raised from the dead; whereof we, who do now miraculously work in his name, are clear undeniable witnesses <sup>t</sup>. And, to convince one and all of you how criminal you have been, as well as to bring you over to a right belief in time coming, know, that his high name (m) of power, through faith exercised by us in his name, hath made even this man, whose case before was awfully calamitous, quite strong, and of a sudden, whom this moment ye see and well

xi. 4. (g) Comp. Mat. xv. 1. John xviii. 30. (h) See Luke xxii. 2. John xix. 15, 21.; comp. Acts vii. 35. (i) Comp. Mat. xxvii. 17, 18, 23. Mark xv. 9, 10. Luke xxiii. 4, 14, 20, 22. John xviii. 39. xix. 4, 12. (j) Not only innocent, but consecrated to divine service; Dan ix. 24. Is. liii. 11. Mat. xxvii. 19. Psal. xlv. 8. Jer. xxiii. 6. (k) See Mat. xxvii. 20, 21. Luke xxiii. 18. John xviii. 4. comp. Acts xxv. 11, 15. (l) Or, leader on to life, published and bestowed by him, Heb. ii. 10. xii. 2.; comp. chap. ii. 23. Rom. v. 12, &c. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ix. 8, 11, 12. x. 19, 20. John v. 21. vi. 39, 40. Such contrast is peculiarly energetic, Is. ix. 6. (m) Or himself; comp. Mark xi. 22. Rom. iii. 22. Eph. iii. 12. Phil. iii. 9.

#### REFLECTIONS.

gainst whom they are committed. The worst should not despair. <sup>e</sup> Now is the time for pardon, in a way of speedy repentance. Ignorance amidst means of information, is criminal. Nothing but the sense of pardoning love can refresh a humbled penitent soul. The most momentous questions ought to be debated in a genteel amicable manner. <sup>t</sup> Christ's resurrection is an irrefragable proof of his divine mission; Mat. xii. 39, 40. Acts x. 41. The present comforts of religion, may be under-

know to have become whole : yea, the faith of confidence which is by (n) our knowledge of him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, *though far from blameless*<sup>g</sup>, I wot that through *the haste of ignorance, in the main*, ye did it, as did also (o) *most of your prompting* (p) rulers. But those things which God before had shewed (q) by the mouth of all his *holy* prophets, that Christ should suffer *even unto death*<sup>h</sup>, he hath so fulfilled, by means of *their malice and gross inattention together*.

## SECT. XV. FROM VERSE XIX.

REPENT ye, therefore *without delay, upon such clear and various grounds*, and be not *only of sorrowful minds, but thoroughly*<sup>a</sup> converted to the belief of right principles and a good behaviour, that all your former sins

Col. ii. 12. (n) Some, in him; as Rom. iv. 11. 1 John v. 6.; comp. 1 Pet. i. 21. 1s. i. 26. (o) See John xv. 22, 24. 1 Cor. ii. 8. (p) As scribes, priests, elders, pharisees, Luke xxiii. 34. John x. 24. (q) See Luke xxiv. 26, 27, 44, 46. Gen. xv. 20. Acts xiii. 27.

## REFLECTIONS.

stood as the dawn of eternal glory. <sup>g</sup> The extenuating of guilt by others, excites hope, and leads to repentance : so Luke xxiii. 34. Acts xiii. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Invincible ignorance only can excuse These are degrees of what are conquerable upon the whole. Certain measures of prejudice may obtain, where there is no rooted malice; 1 Tim. i. 13. Very different was Luke xvi. 14. John iii. 19. v. 44. Offences, when clearly repented of, may be of singular good use to others. <sup>h</sup> The sight of Christ at last, will be intolerable to those who have not repented.

<sup>a</sup> The Spirit of God, and other means, does not supercede the necessity of human endeavours; see Jer. xviii. 11. Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. xxxiii. 11. Joel ii. 12, 13. Zech. i. 3, 4. comp. Acts ii. 38. Luke xvii. 4. comp. last notes of last Section. It belongeth to the preachers office, to declare Christ's faith with meek wisdom, to all who are desirous to learn. It required thought and contrivance, to make any tolerable evasion from such convincing proofs; or to allege any specious pretences for apprehending and punishing the apostles and their associates.

may be (a) blotted out, *as it were*, from divine remembrance, when the (b) times of refreshing (c) after much trouble in this world shall come from the immediate heavenly presence (d) of the Lord. And, when he hath prepared his faithful for himself, he shall send Jesus Christ in a (e) form superlatively glorious, which before (f) was preached unto you for obedience, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: whom the heavens must not only (g) receive as now, but keep out of sight personally, until the long expected happy times of the restitution of all (h) things, obtain their accomplishment<sup>b</sup>, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets (i), since the world began. For Moses in particular, who is with you of great and just authority,

(a) Comp. Jer. xxxi. 34. xxxiii. 8. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xiii. 1. Under this is comprehended the gift of eternal life, If. liii. 4, &c. xliv. 22. (b) Or seasons. Some, times of refreshment; renovation of all things. (c) See 1 Pet. iv. 12. If. xlix. 10. Rev. vii. 16. 2 Tim. i. 16. Luke i. 71, 74. If. ii. 1. xi. 6. Mic. iv. 1. Exod. viii. 15. As calamities are compared to intense heat; so are deliverances to refreshful gales. Of this last sort certainly was deliverance from the fast approaching ruin of the Jews. (d) Comp. Numb. vi. 25, 26. Psal. iv. 7. xvii. 15. lxvii. 2. Dan. ix. 27. (e) See Mat. xvi. 27. John xiv. 3. 1 Thess. i. 10. iv. 16, 17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 10. 1 Pet. i. 20. (f) Some, before appointed. (g) Comp. Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 31. Acts i. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. x. 12, 13. (h) Or establishment of all things; as calling of the gentiles; propagation of the glory of God through the world; recovery of the Jews; and delivering up the kingdom unto God, even the Father. Amos v. 5. Psal. xvi. 5. Mat. xvii. 11. Heb. ix. 20. Acts xv. 15, &c. Amos ix. 25. Messiah times, and things belonging to him. (i) Or from the earliest ages; Luke i. 70. Jude 14. Hos. xiii. 14. Dan. xii. 3, 4. Mal. iii. 14, &c. Some, from the present æra; comp. Job.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> Such reign of Christ is far superior to that expected by the Jews. Divine refreshment immediately mingles itself with a sense of pardon and eternal happiness. The conversion of the Jews, as a people, will be a season of extraordinary prosperity and joy. The vilest and most aggravated sinners are not excepted from the grace of divine invitation. It much concerns them, therefore, that it be not addressed in vain.

truly said unto the (j) fathers of his day, A prophet<sup>e</sup> of distinguished eminence shall the Lord your nationally chosen and beneficent God raise up unto you (k) in latter days, out of the number of your own Jewish brethren, endowed with heavenly wisdom, legislative authority, and a power of working (l) miracles, like unto me; him, my great superior in each of these respects, shall ye obediently hear (m) in all things, preferably to any who may have gone before that time, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul of man which will not obediently hear that illustrious prophet, shall be destroyed (n) without mercy from<sup>d</sup> among the people. Yea, and all the prophets, besides Moses, from Samuel, and those that follow after him in the sacred list, as many as have spoken largely, under proper credentials, have<sup>e</sup> likewise foretold of these (o) present happy days. Ye, my friends, are the (p) children of them to whom

xxiv. 2. If lxiii. 16, 19. (j) Deut. xviii. 15. (k) See Mat. xliii. 34, 35. John vi. 32. 1 Thess. i. 15. Mal. iv. 4. Deut. xxxiv. 10. Mat. v. 17. A masterly warning address. (l) A mediator also, Heb. viii. 6. (m) Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 25. Mat. xvii. 5. Luke xvi. 31. This imports, believing his doctrine; obeying his laws; trusting his promises; fearing his threats. (n) Cut off from among, &c. (o) See close of note h. (p) For this phrase, see Gen. xx. 7. 1 Chron. xvi. 16, 22: Psal. cv. 9. Mat. xix. 15. Luke xx. 34. Gen.

#### REFLECTIONS:

<sup>c</sup> The greater any favour is, the greater is the guilt of neglecting or despising it, Heb. ii. 2. x. 28. What beset the Jews, ought to be a warning for every one. The spirit of prophecy affords the most ample testimony to Christ and his gospel. Christ in his apostles, is the same as when he personally taught; comp. Acts xxvi. 23. Eph. ii. 17. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. To a sinner, there neither is, nor can be happiness without repentance, Acts ii. 40, 47. Conversion is produced by the doctrine, miracles, and spirit of Christ. Christian principles are to be pressed and inculcated, till good habits are formed in the heart. Bad actions are worse than erroneous opinions, and do greatly weaken the authority of the gospel. Compel not, but teach.<sup>d</sup> He only that believeth can hear to purpose. They who give faith to Moses, ought heartily to love Jesus, whom in this prophecy he so highly commends. <sup>e</sup> By Jesus, as our guide and

the prophets *were sent*, and of *them you also boast*; to *whom belonged* the covenant (*q*) which God made with our *ancient patriarchal* fathers, saying (*r*) *explicitly* unto Abraham, And in *one of thy* (*s*) *seed shall all the kindreds of people upon the face of the earth be* (*t*) *blest with advantages numerous and unspeakable*. Unto you, *Israelites, therefore first*, God, *most high and most faithful*, having raised up his *beloved Son*, Jesus (*u*), sent him, *with every needful supernatural gift and qualification*, to bless you <sup>f</sup> *both now and throughout an eternal world*, in turning away every one of you from his *ruinous* (*x*) *iniquities*.

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## CHAP. IV.

### SECT. XVI. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND as they spake unto the people, *these and similar useful words*, a number of the *Jewish* priests, and the (*a*) captain of the temple *for that time*, and the (*b*)

xv. 2. Gal. iv. 28. 1 Kings xx. 35. Is. viii. 18. Amos vii. 14. (*q*) Comp. Mat. viii. 12 ix. 10. Luke xx. 34. Esdras viii. 35, &c. Rom. ix. 4, 8. (*r*) Gen. xii. 7. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxvii. 14; Comp. Deut. x. 8. Is. lxxv. 16. (*s*) Offspring, or issue. (*t*) Comp. Gen. xlviii. 20. Psal. lxxii. 17. Gal. iii. 8, 14, 16. Deut. xiii. 1. Syr. xlvii. 1. xlviii. 1. (*u*) See Jude ii. 16, 18. iii. 9, 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Amos ii. 11. Acts xiii. 21, 23. v. 30. Mat. iv. 17. How inestimable are the privileges of pardon, divine aid, and everlasting life! See Mat. x. 5. xv. 24. Deut. xiii. 1. and last note. (*x*) Sometimes used to signify vicious customs in general; and, at other times, malice. Mark vii. 22. Luke xi. 39. Rom. i. 28. 1 Cor. v. 8.

(*a*) Or ruler; see Luke xxii. 4, 52. Mat. xx. 1. (*b*) See Acts xiii. 8. Mat. xxii. 23. Josephus' account also, of this sect. He

### REFLECTIONS.

leader on, we are called from bondage to that freedom which ever shall endure. Holiness is the grand end and design of the Christian revelation. <sup>f</sup> If we are not willing to turn even from our own iniquity, it is impossible we can share in the divine blessing. Those low in circumstances are more apt to regard the gospel than their superiors.



Sadducees<sup>a</sup>, who believed no future state, and therefore were the more severe exactors of immediate punishments, came upon them, being much grieved that they, in the nearest connection with him whom they had so lately crucified, taught the people to the above purpose, and preached (c), through the power and example of Jesus, the (d) resurrection from the dead to all his faithful followers. And, not content with verbal opposition, they laid violent hands on them<sup>b</sup>, and put them, as seditious persons, in sure (e) hold, of place and guards, unto the next day: for it was now even-tide, and therefore they behoved to delay judgement (f). Howbeit<sup>c</sup>, many of them which heard the apostolical word set forth before this, believed (g) it to be from above; and the number of the men (h) who did solemnly and publicly profess their regards, was now about (i) five thousand.

represents them as remarkable for a fierce and cruel temper, particularly when they sat in judgement. No wonder, since they placed all their hopes of happiness in this life. In whole, these made the supreme court, or Sanhedrim, Acts xxiii. 6. 7. (c) In; so, ver. 9, 10, 12. He was not only the example, but the efficient cause, Jo. vi. 48. xi. 25. xiv. 6. (d) That is, existence again, or a future state. (e) A closer confinement than common prison; see Acts v. 19, 22, 25. xxiv. 23. Jer. xx. 2. (f) The above discourse, then, seems to have been much abridged. (g) Comp. 2 Tim. ii. 9. (h) Perhaps put for people in general; see chap. ii. 41, 47. (i) How exact a fulfilment of Luke v. 10. (j) John vi. 48. xi. 25. xiv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30. comp. Luke xxiv. 47.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> See last notes of the last Section. Infidels, or sceptical bigots, are as ready to persecute when they have power, as any religious and enthusiastic sect whatsoever. <sup>b</sup> When the weight of all their former miracles was added to this late extraordinary cure, it was enough to strike a whole nation, and convince numbers of the well disposed and attentive. When did the philosophers succeed so gloriously in making converts to such doctrines as were calculated to promote truth, virtue, piety, and humanity? Christ, by degrees, trains his disciples for their severest trials.

## SECT. XVII. FROM VERSE V.

AND it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers *from among the priests*, and elders of the Sanhedrim, and scribes of *reputed skill in the law*, all belonging to one court, and Annas, the (a) late high priest, and (b) Caiaphas, his present successor, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were, by previous notice, gathered together (c) at Jerusalem. And when, by their inferior officers, they had set them (d) whom they had close confined before, in the midst of so many zealous judges, they asked, By what sort of power, or by what pretended authoritative name have ye done this work (e) of healing? Then Peter, filled with large invigorating influences of (f) the Holy Ghost, said (g) promptly, and under becoming ardour, unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel (h), if we this day, like offenders against public peace and happiness<sup>a</sup>, be examined (i) of the good deed done so lately and openly to the poor impotent man, and by what means he is now made whole; be it known unto you all, both high and low, and to all the

(a) See Luke iii. 2. Mat. ii. 4. (b) All mentioned by Josephus. De Bel. l. xx. c. 3. l. ii. c. 15. comp. ver. 15. Luke iv. 1. John iii. 1. Acts iii. 17. (c) Or, in. Disquisitions relative to magic and names, belonged to the Sanhedrim. (d) Comp. chap. iii. 3. iv. 3. (e) See chap. iii. 6, 7. whether medical or magical? and, for answer, verses 9, 10. (f) Or being full of divine fortitude; comp. Mat. x. 19, 20. Mark xiii. 11. (g) Think now of Mat. x. 20. John xvi. 8. (h) Or since, as in Mat. xii. 28. John x. 35, 38. He might either have been brought thither, or have come of his own accord. (i) So this Greek word is used by the best writers;

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Enemies of the truth cannot endure the upright teachers of it. The same things affect people very differently according to their different dispositions. Even those who befriend the public most, by their doctrine, are held out as enemies. Yet, where good means are interrupted, there may be certain measures of excellent fruit. The higher that some are in authority, the more do they incline to be mischievous; and when

people of Israel, *who have heard, or may come to hear of this transaction*, that by the *very powerful* name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (*j*), whom ye, *a few weeks ago*, so *rashly and barbarously* crucified <sup>b</sup>, but whom, notwithstanding, Almighty God, his affectionate <sup>c</sup> father, raised (*k*) from the dead to glorious eminence; even by him, *confidentially called upon*, doth this *once dismally afflicted* man stand here before you whole and vigorous. Know farther, if you will, this is the stone in royal David's (*l*) prophecy, which was, *through weakness of some, and more culpable violence of others*, set at nought contemptuously, even of you church-builders, which yet, in spite of both, is become the *uniting and beautified* head of the (*m*) corner. Neither is there like (*n*) salvation in any other patriarchal, prophetic, or priestly character to confer: for, to say all in few words, there is none other (*o*) name of power under heaven, given (*p*) out and known

see chap. xii. 9. xxv. 26. xxviii. 18. (*j*) Words free, and full of gravity. (*k*) They durst not plead ignorance, or the absurd saying in Mat. xxviii. 13. (*l*) Psal. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxi. 42. (*m*) Or angle. (*n*) Or salutary virtue. (*o*) For name, see Psal. v. 12. Acts i. 15. vii. 22. comp. Mat. xxi. 23. (*p*) Opposed to the whole world, Jer.

## REFLECTIONS.

they act together, the matter must be considerable. <sup>b</sup> The guilt which is necessary to alarm and bring to repentance, ought not to be dissimbled. In exposing that of the great, special boldness as well as prudence, is necessary. Sometimes judgments must be preached, at other times people must be appeased, and pleasantly intreated by the sure hope of pardon, divine assistance, and eternal life. To abolish the name of Jesus is the earnest desire and study of all his enemies. The more such malice strives, the more ought his glory and renown to be set forth. Enemies of truth reason not, but use violence; though as much as possible, under pretences of law. <sup>c</sup> The resurrection of Jesus, was demonstrative proof that he had not only been innocent, but all along an object of supreme delight. Only through faith and obedience to Christ, can they who have the offers of his salvation reasonably hope to enjoy everlasting happiness. Yet God may extend his benefits beyond what men have any right to affirm. They who live agreeable to an inferior light, would

among men, whereby <sup>d</sup> we must be *completely and for ever* (q) saved.

### SECT. XVIII. FROM VERSE XIII.

NOW when they of the council saw, by such manner of address, the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived, from well known signs which had been about them, that they were private (a), unlearned, and naturally ignorant men, they marvelled at so great and sudden a change; and they took secret (b) knowledge of them, that they had been brought up as disciples, with Jesus. And beholding at the same time, the man which was so lately healed, standing with them, they could say <sup>a</sup> no-

x. 11. comp. Mat. xx. 26. Luke i. 25. Phil. ii. 9, 10. (q) Some, healed. The following passages consider; Mat. i. 21. John i. 9. viii. 12. Acts v. 32. x. 42. Heb. v. 9. vii. 25. which all lead to the large sense of John xi. 25.

(a) Persons of obscure life; see 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 23, 24. 2 Cor. xi. 6. Mat. xxi. 23. Luke xviii. 18. John xii. 42. (b) They might suspect, though they would not own, somewhat supernatural; for even Christ himself had been educated at no school, comp. John xviii. 15, 16. How wonderful, that such should defend themselves

### REFLECTIONS.

cordially have embraced a brighter. <sup>d</sup> Christ, as head corner-stone, holds together the whole church. Here is an oblique and just insinuation to the disadvantage of their judicial character, Rom. xiii. 3. &c. To deceive the piously inquisitive, would be a contradiction to every divine excellence. Nothing had been more easy than for judges of the land to expose a deceit as to Christ's resurrection, if that had really been the case. They never deny the fact and say, that when soldiers slept the body was taken away. The simple and unlearned are apt to be abashed in large assemblies and among those of honourable authority. To stand clear and undismayed then, argues great presence of mind and heavenly aids. They who would pick quarrels do it by inquisition. They who have nought to defend them but conspiracies, prisons, and deaths, are not far from their end. Neither ought our freedom of speech to be reproachful to any man, nor flattering. Deliberation, constancy, and wisdom, shine forth in Peter's defence.

<sup>a</sup> To matters of plain fact, words are absurdly opposed.

thing (c) *reasonable, however much inclined or even possible*, against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside<sup>b</sup> out of the council-house, as *criminals who were to be judged*, they *the more easily* conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we *now* do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle of *useful and clear nature*, hath been done by them is *already* manifest to all of them that dwell in Jerusalem (d), and we cannot, *if we would*, deny it. But that it *may* spread no further *to our disadvantage* among the *besitating* people, let us straitly (e) threaten them<sup>c</sup>, *in strong*

as they did; and likewise charge their iniquitous judges! (c) Comp. Job xxxii. 5. Neh. vi. 7. (d) Their inclination here is rather too manifest. (e) Comp. Luke xxii. 15. Acts xx. 30.

## REFLECTIONS.

Free courage, and steadfastness of mind, will appear in the countenance itself. Where no fault is, even people of rank and authority are at a perplexing loss for accusation, lest shame and guilt should appear. Conviction, from force of argument, may obtain, where truth is not embraced. <sup>b</sup> The thoughts and communications of judges ought to be free, and their sentences impartial. By manifest, cruel, and unjust measures, even the common people are apt to be irritated. To appear indifferent is more political than to rage. <sup>c</sup> How hideous! against conscience to restrain the success and glory of truth. A vain attempt, like that of opposing the course of a strong river. Even neutral base silence, is against a good cause. To bring about this, is the utmost length often that malice itself can go. Awful human authority, is yet highly inimical to divine scriptural discoveries. No church power or authority can absolve, or excuse any from the obedience due to magistrates, and the just laws of their country, nor any way interfere with the same. Though, when those magistrates and laws encroach upon the natural rights of conscience, we ought to obey God rather than man, Rom. xiii. 1, &c. Particular churches have it only in their power to put in execution the laws necessary to their own preservation; and not to bind invariably what they think well of at the time; comp. 1 Cor. xi. 16 Heb. iii. 6. Eph. i. 20, 22 Mat. xviii. 15, &c. Acts xv. 22, 25. 1 Cor. v. 4 2 Thess. iii. 6. Eph. iv. 11, &c. Acts vi. 3. So early were private Christian assemblies forbid to be held. It is fitting that men,

*terms, with rigorous punishment, that they speak henceforth favourably to no man whatever in this hated name of one whom we slew, and they as yet declare to be alive. And, accordingly, they called them in, and commanded them, with severe certification, not to speak at all, either directly or indirectly, nor teach in the name of their favourite (f) Jesus. But Peter and John nobly answered<sup>d</sup> and said unto them all, Whether it be lawfully right in the sight of an omniscient God (g),*

(f) That he was Christ, had been crucified, and was risen again to heavenly honour, comp. verse 18. chap. v. 28, &c. (g) See Amos iii. 8. A frequent sentence this among the rabbins.

#### REFLECTIONS.

after the way which God wills should act : *Martyrs of Palestine.* Christians should submit to the severest hardships, rather than bind themselves to what is adverse to their religion. *ibid.* The self importance of some is hurt by contradicting their commands. All should be permitted to worship God after their own manner. How comes it then, to be denied by Christians to Christians ? Better, say some, to have no religion at all, than to profess what we do not, cannot believe. The authority of the supreme lawgiver must be the measure of belief and obedience to his subjects. They fly to violence who cannot answer in any other way. <sup>d</sup> The highest reverence is due to infinite sovereign will, Amos iii. 8. Acts v. 29. Adversaries, whom no reason can satisfy, must be confounded with plain speech. The senses rightly exercised, may be good foundations for belief. How hardened were the Jews at last ! It shews a meanness of spirit, and malignity of mind in men, to deny works which they are not able to imitate ; and to render those odious who are employed in giving instruction to the public, on important matters, of which they know nothing. We are obliged to those who put us under a necessity of studying religion. Many of the monks charged Luther with being the author of a book called the New Testament. Sharp and cruel threatenings are a degree of persecution. Here is constancy without reproach. Wise and frank answers intimidate powerful foes. How contemptible is a threatening, devoid of both hope and argument ? To do good, like the apostles, let us be mighty ; and as void of all strength for doing hurt. Cankered malice only defers to seek another occasion. They will fear mean people sometimes, who will not regard God. What are

*who will review this sentence, to hearken submissively unto you more than unto God himself, judge ye, in presence of one another, who cannot be ignorant of the law, and let us know the result. For ourselves, we (b) cannot but freely speak out<sup>d</sup>, for the benefit of all, the things which offend you, and which we have so often both certainly seen and heard. So when they, who were under the most sacred obligation to deal truly and equitably, had, yet further threatened them<sup>e</sup>, if they should persist, they let them go out of their custody, for a time, finding nothing (i) specious or probable to condescend upon, how they might punish them as transgressors, because of the more unbiassed people<sup>f</sup>: for nearly all men, save themselves, now glorified by praise<sup>g</sup> the powerful goodness of God in the apostles, for that great miracle which was lately done. For the man had not only been lame from the womb (j), but was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

(b) A moral, not natural impossibility; so Deut. xii. 17. Mat. ix. 15. 1 Cor. iii. 11. x. 21. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. Mat. ii. 19. John iii. 27. Acts x. 41. Mat. xxviii. 19. (i) Comp. Luke xxiii. 14. Acts iii. 9, &c. xiii. Luke xxii. 14. (j) Continuance makes diseases desperate in their cure.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ten thousand philosophical subtleties, when compared with a sentiment like this? Socrates in Plato has a similar one. See the pious Dr. Doddridge on this text. What so detestable as a proud, bigotted, overbearing temper? comp. John xvi. 2. <sup>d</sup> How delightful is zeal and courage in a good cause? see II. xl. 29. May our knowledge of Jesus be traced from genuine, pious, and virtuous effects! May the ministers of the gospel never want courage in a good cause! <sup>e</sup> It is hideous tyrannical oppression in any to substitute mere human will in opposition to what is divine. To incline what is evil, is guilt before God, James i. 13, 14. The policies of men's wit are vain against Almighty God. They could not keep Christ in the grave, and now they think to bury his name. An extreme love of wealth and fame, will not hearken to reason. <sup>f</sup> The simple and unprejudiced are often better judges of sacred matters than their priests; see Numb. xvi. 41. 1 Kings xii. & xiii. Brutish and violent men, are only the more pertinacious for being told their faults. <sup>g</sup> All things are of God.

## SECT. XIX. FROM VERSE XXIII.

AND being let go *from examination before the council*, they immediately went to their own company (a), *who believed in Jesus, for advice and prayer*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they, *undismayed and yet unpresuming*<sup>a</sup>, lift up their ardent voice to Almighty God, with one accord, and said, (b) *Lord of universal nature*, thou art God, *even thou*<sup>b</sup> alone, which hast made (c) heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who, by the mouth of thy (d) royal servant David, *under heavenly inspiration* (e) hast said, Why did the heathen *nations so unjustly* rage, and *even the Jewish people, along with them*, imagine such vain (f) cruel things? The *haughty* (g) kings of the earth stood up *with full confidence of success*<sup>c</sup>, and the rulers *under them* were gathered together *as in battle array* against the Lord (b) *Jehovah*, and against his (i) Christ. For of a truth against thy (j) holy child<sup>d</sup> Jesus, whom thou hast anointed (k) *with the Holy Ghost above measure*,

(a) See John x. 3, 4. 12. xvi. 32. (b) Or, thou, O God; as in Mark xv. 34. comp. Mat. xxvii. 46. One only spoke; comp. Gen. xlviii. 2. (c) Chief parts, comprehending the whole world; so, Acts xiv. 13. (d) Or child, see Mat. xii. 18. (e) Psal. ii. 1. St. Luke refers to that opposition which began in Christ. (f) Things which must certainly issue in their own disappointment and ruin. (g) A name used for all very great people. (h) See Hebrew, and LXX. (i) Or anointed. What primarily might be said of David, 2 Sam. ii. 8. 9. v. 17. in the fullest sense accommodates to the Messiah. (j) Or son, chap. iii. 13, 26 (k) Comp. John x. 38. iii.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Prayer is the best ground of Christian comfort, and Almighty love a clear foundation for prayer. True mutual love replenishes kindred hearts with joy, in the success of each. With sorrow, in the case of God's servants, joy is wisely tempered. Gospel success is a chief source of spiritual gladness. <sup>b</sup> The divine right to govern, is absolute, irresistible. <sup>c</sup> All power upon earth is as nothing to that which is infinite. <sup>d</sup> Jesus is completely qualified to act as prophet, priest, and



both Herod (l) *Antipas*, and Pontius Pilate, *the Roman governor of Judea*, with the *idoltrous gentiles*, and the *unhappy (m) people of Israel* were *thus impiously gathered together*, for to do whatsoever thy *over-ruling hand*, and thy *unerring sovereign (n) counsel* determined before to be done<sup>e</sup>, *as eventually productive of much good*. And now, Lord, *who hast hitherto triumphed over malicious guilt*, behold their *present haughty threatenings to obstruct the gospel progress*, so as to render them *also ineffectual*: and grant unto thy *devoted witnessing servants*, that with all boldness they may *hereafter speak thy (o) gracious word*, in *midst of the greatest dangers*<sup>f</sup>, by stretching forth, *at the same time*, thine own *Almighty hand along with theirs*, to *heal the most incurable diseases naturally*: and that signs (p) and wonders, *undeniably miraculous*, may *still* be done by the (q) *powerful name* of thy holy *exalted child Jesus*.

13, 26. Acts ix. 4. (l) The wicked son of a great wicked father; see Mat. xiv. 1, &c. Mark vi. 14. Luke xxiii. 7, 10, &c. (m) Most of them; see Gen. xxviii. 3. xlviii. 4. (n) Or decree. With God there is no need to deliberate; see chap. ii. 23. Actions and things may be here personified. Rom. viii. 17, 29. Some, what Christ himself was anointed with the Holy Spirit to do, Acts x. 38. (o) See chap. ii. 29. Eph. vi. 19. (p) Comp. chap. ii. 22. (q) See verse 27. chap. iii. 13.

#### REFLECTIONS.

king. No will or power of man can impede God's eternal purposes. His truth, in the fulfilment of prophecy, is quite conspicuous. <sup>e</sup> Human malice, in the hand of God, may effectuate great advantages, Gen. xlv. 7. What God did decree, was the death of Christ for the good of mankind; and not the guilt by which this was perpetrated. The efficacy of divine purposes should encourage all to suffer the greatest extremities in truth's cause. Determinations of the Almighty must ever be understood as consistent with free human agency, Luke xxii. 22. <sup>f</sup> Freedom of speech upon great pressing occasions, is a divine gift, Prov. xvi. 1. Gospel progress ought to be much upon our hearts in prayer. Signs and wonders done by the name of Jesus, in former ages, encourage us to hope for his continued aids, whilst pleading his cause, and pleading as we ought.

## SECT. XX. FROM VERSE XXXI.

AND when they had prayed *as above*, the place was shaken, *in proof of divine peculiar (a) presence*, where they were assembled together; and they were all filled *more sensibly<sup>a</sup> than ever*, with gifts of the Holy Ghost, and *by that means* they spake, upon all subsequent occasions, the gracious word of God with suitably *unvarying* boldness. And the multitude of them that believed in Christ, were like people (b) of one heart, and of one soul<sup>b</sup> *as to agreement of mind, with beneficent affection*: neither said any of them *narrowly, even to his own breast*, that ought of the things which he possessed, was solely his own, but they had all things proper to be divided (c) in common. And with great power of efficacious zeal, gave the apostles witness, both (d) by word and deed, of the (e) resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great *inexpressible* grace (f) from God and men,<sup>c</sup> was upon them all. Neither was there any among them, *however distant or low*, that lacked *amidst all their difficulties and sufferings*: for, *whenever it was needful*, as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold

(a) Comp. Hag. ii. 7, 8. John xiv. 13, 14. Perhaps attended with a like sound, and like appearance, as chap. ii. 1. &c. xvi. 26. (b) Proverbial. The cause for the effect; fulfilling, John xvii. 11, 21, 22.; comp. 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. i. 27. ii. 2. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Two friends have but one soul. *Plut.* (c) See chap. ii. 44. The only thing improper to be common was too frequent, even among heathens of great name. No words can be more expressive of intimate endearing friendship. (d) Comp. chap. v. 12. vi. 8. xix. 11. Col. i. 29. 2 Thess. i. 11. (e) A chief part of the apostolical office, see Acts i. 22.; and the most disputed at the time. (f) Or favour;

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> They who improve as they ought obtain still more, John xv. 2. Benevolence is peculiarly conciliating. There is nothing so effectual as is the prayer of the church with one consent. Assaults do but increase the power of divine truths. <sup>b</sup> The resurrection of Jesus proved, proves every other article of his divine religion. <sup>c</sup> See notes<sup>a</sup>.

them, *without delay, entirely off*, and (g) brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them *unreluctantly* down at the apostles' (h) feet, *to be disposed of at their pleasure*<sup>d</sup>: and distribution was *faithfully* made unto every man, *for present relief*, according as he had need. And Joses in particular, who by the apostles was surnamed, *from his benevolent usefulness*, Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The (i) son of consolation) a Levite *priest*, and of the (j) country of Cyprus, having (k) land *there*, sold it<sup>e</sup>, and laid it, *even as others*, at the apostles' feet.

see chap. ii. 47.; comp. Eph. vi. 24. (g) The case was peculiar and not always to be followed; see chap. xi. 29. xii. 12. xxi. 8, 16. (h) Alluding to their sitting high, as teachers and presidents; chap. xxi. 3. comp. Psal. viii. 7. (i) Likewise of exhortation, Acts xiii. 15.; both comprehended in the office of teaching, see chap. ix. 24. xiii. 13. (j) An island in the Mediterranean, and most easterly part thereof; about 150 miles long, and 70 broad. (k) Or, in the suburbs, Numb. xxv. 3, 4. Or it might belong to his wife. He was probably among the first, and illustrious as to quantity and manner; comp. Jer. xxxi. 7. The Israelites were much dispersed by persecution.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>d</sup> The poor's stock should be distributed as with a father's tenderness and impartiality. Christians were sometimes termed, by primitive writers, the united people. To render friendship close and faithful, there must be a sameness of inclinations, a corresponding will, and unanimity in judgement. Here is a beautiful delineation in miniature, of plain and simple worship, strict morals, and inoffensive sociability. Compare it with Pliny's Letter to Trojan. Who can trace the memoirs of such a golden age, without secret complacency and exultation of mind? Joys multiply with numbers, under the influence of pure love. <sup>e</sup> Divine grace ever operates generously. We are not proprietors, but stewards. Where no ambition, nor envy, nor brawling, nor strife are, there is conformity of mind, and peaceable quietness of heart. It is much more easy and common to impart spiritual good things than temporal. We should so give, as though the gift itself were our own proper good. To be exemplary in alms-giving, much adorns the gospel. Christian converse, and praising God, should be our daily business and entertainment.

## CHAP. V.

## SECT. XXI. FROM VERSE I.

BUT a certain man, *who was a late convert from among the Jews*, named (a) Ananias, with (b) Sapphira his wife, *as if they had intended to equal the zeal and liberality of Barnabas*, sold a possession, *of design they gave out, to bestow the whole price, like some (c) others, in support of their poor brethren*; and, *notwithstanding, he fraudulently kept back (d) part of the price*, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part *only*, and laid it, *in great form*, at the apostles' feet. But Peter, (e) *by the Spirit*, said, O Ananias, why hath Satan<sup>a</sup>, *through thy base permission (f)*, filled thine heart *with such evil thoughts and purposes*, as to lie to, *yea, even audaciously attempt to (g) deceive the Holy Ghost, under whom we act*, and to keep back part of the price of the land, *when affecting to give the whole*? Whiles it remained *unsold*, was it not thine own? And *also*, after it was sold, was it not *quite* in thine own (b) power to *dispose of at pleasure*? Why hast thou, *then*, conceived this *wicked thing* in thine heart, and *carried it forward to so shocking a pitch*<sup>b</sup>? Thou hast not lied unto man

(a) Same name as in Jer. xxviii. 1. (b) Signifies beautiful, Psal. xvi. 6. (c) See chap. iv. 34. (d) A kind of sacrilege, with hypocrisy. Josh. vii. 1, 2. Tit. i. 10. An ambition of fame. (e) This of discerning hearts, at times, was an eminent apostolical gift. Peter, though a chief apostle, was no ruler among them. (f) By this the Hebrews expressed, being bold to do a thing, Eccl. vii. 1.; see John xiii. 27. (g) Or belie the Holy Ghost, in the apostles; see margin translation, Luke x. 16. Mat. xii. 13. (h) Therefore, a strict community of goods, even then, was not indispensable. Only the poor were to be cared for, Deut. xxiii. 21, &c.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> What is agreeable to the wicked one, and may be both suggested and forwarded by him, doth not excuse guilt; but the contrary often, ver. 4. Col. iii. 9. John viii. 44. <sup>b</sup> The same kinds of crimes may be highly aggravated.

*only, whom appearances may mislead, but unto an omniscient God (i), whom the most specious imaginable cannot. And Ananias, immediately upon hearing these words, fell down to the ground, and (j), by a visible awful stroke of divine justice<sup>c</sup>, gave up the (k) Ghost : and great (l) fear came on all them that saw, and heard the report of these things. And some of the young able-bodied men, who were present with Peter and the other apostles at this meeting, arose, wound him up after the manner of the Jews, and carried him out, and (m) buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife Sapphira, not knowing what was done relative to her husband's death, and the manner in which it had happened, came in to see what had detained him. And Peter, who knew wherefore she came, answered unto her (n) design before them all. Tell me whether ye sold the land for just so much (o) as has been reported? And she said, yea, for so much precisely. Then Peter said unto her, by a like spiritual impulse as above, How is it that ye have thus wickedly agreed together, to (p) tempt and provoke the righteous Spirit of the Lord? Behold, I hear, even now, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door in their return, and (q)*

- (i) See Exod. xvi. 2, 8. Mark ix. 37. Luke x. 16. 1 Cor. viii. 12.  
 (j) Peter himself might have no hand in this. No just precedent therefore to punish heretics with death. (k) Or expired. (l) Reverence for Almighty God, like Luke v. 26. As yet the church had no protecting magistrates or rulers. (m) Or put the dead body, by some wrapper, into proper condition for this, comp. Ezek. xxxix. 5.  
 (n) And not to any former question of hers, comp. Mat. xi. 25.  
 (o) Naming a sum probably. (p) Or try; comp. Exod. xvii. 7. Eph. v. 5. Phil. iii. 19. (q) This was revealed to Peter by the

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> How dreadful a thing is it to lie? Here can be no error of judgement, but wicked perverseness, Rev. xxi. 8, 27. The Holy Ghost loveth plainness of heart, and hateth dissimulation. To be more ambitious of honour than of true holiness even the best should dread. In the eye of God, it is a hideous thing to deface liberality with a base motive. Offence against clear light is peculiarly grievous. The plain simple gospel is hurt by nothing so much as dissimulation and avarice.

shall forthwith carry thee out dead after him. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead as the apostle had foretold, and carrying <sup>a</sup> her forth (r), buried her, with some customary preparations, by the side of her husband. And great fear of the (s) Most High, more than ever, came upon all the church-members present, and upon as many likewise, as heard the report of these things.

## SECT. XXII. FROM VERSE XII.

AND by the instrumental (a) hands of the apostles, were many notable miraculous signs and wonders publicly wrought among the people, in support of their sacred ministrations; (and they were all present, for religious endearing converse, with one <sup>a</sup> accord of spirit, in Solomon's (b) porch. And of the rest <sup>b</sup> who were not

Spirit; and done, as in the former case, by an immediate divine hand. (r) Partners in bed, guilt, and punishment. In their guilt was implied, as above, ambition, covetousness, hypocritical falsehood, doubts as to the extent of apostolical gifts. It was done in midst of great miracles, and tended to disgrace Christ's ministers; consequently to hurt gospel success in an early period. (s) The apostles too could not fail, as divine instruments, to be respected.

(a) Comp. 1<sup>st</sup> xx. 2. Dan. ix. 10. Mal. i. 1. Acts vii. 35. (b) See chap. iii. 11.; and comp. chap. ii. 46. As yet, they observed the

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> In the beginning of a new dispensation, such examples might prevent the like daring wickedness in multitudes, Lev. x. 1, 2. Now was the dignity of the Spirit of God vindicated; and also, the honour of our blessed Lord in his apostles. Awful instances of divine severity ought to be attended to with humble reverence. May integrity and uprightness ever preserve us! Psal. xxv. 21. God is peculiarly insulted under the dress of religion. Pure church members, though few, are preferable to numerous sons of falsehood.

<sup>a</sup> Unity of mind is one natural fruit of brotherly love. Smaller differences would easily remove, by an apostolical sentence. The sincere need not, nor ought they to be deterred by divine judgements against dissemblers. <sup>b</sup> The apostles sought no renown from their own doings, but referred all to

*genuine members of the church of Christ, durst no man (c) hastily join himself to them; but, in general, the people magnified them by praise and other due marks of honour. And believers, of pure steadfast zeal, were the more added to the Lord, on each of these accounts, both of men (d) and women (e), infomuch that they brought forth the sick from their houses (f) into most of the frequented streets, and laid them on convenient beds and (g) couches, whence of themselves they could not stir, that, at the least, since nigher they could not come for the abler crowds (h), the shadows of Peter and John passing by, might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the adjacent cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks to be relieved, and them which were grievously vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one by miracle<sup>d</sup> who did thus offer themselves.*

### SECT. XXIII. FROM VERSE XVII.

THEN the<sup>a</sup> high priest *for the time (a)*, rose up in

Mosaic rules, and did differ from the other Jews only by faith in Christ: this was proper till the gentiles should be called; comp. Acts xv. 5, &c. (c) They stood in awe of such venerable characters and powers; see 1 Kings xvii. 18. (d) Referring to chap. iv. 4. (e) The sulj & of miracles resumed. (f) Or, in every street; see chap. xxii. 19. (g) A meaner kind of beds, Mark ii. 4. (h) So great confidence had they in their power with God by Christ; see chap. xix. 12.; comp. John xiv. 12.

(a) As in Exodus xxxiii. 1. Deut. xxxii. 38. Probably either Annas

### REFLECTIONS:

their master. Common people do, in many cases, judge without those fixed and inveterate prejudices which entangle the minds of their superiors. They might still hope, some how or other, that they who wrought such miracles would accomplish their temporal deliverance. When shall men express as great concern for their souls as for their bodies? <sup>c</sup> See last reflection. Sincere believers must be devoted to the Lord's service, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. xv. 7. <sup>d</sup> See reflection c.

<sup>a</sup> False prelates cannot abide the increase of true religion. Malicious envy gets the better of sober counsel often, and even

*fury anew, and all they that were of like cruel sentiments with him (which is so suitable to (b) the sect of the Sadducees<sup>b</sup>) and were, even filled with zeal of indignation (c) against those who opposed the national rulers; and laid their violent hands on the apostles of Christ, and put them, like gross malefactors, in the common prison. But, to embolden them, the (d) angel of the Lord, Jehovah, being sent by night, opened without noise<sup>c</sup> the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, in his great name: Go, resolutely stand up (e), and speak, even in the thronged temple to the Jewish people, all the words of (f) this doctrine relative to future and eternal<sup>d</sup> life, which their guilty leaders so much despise. And when they heard that heavenly command, they, in face of all dangers, entered into the temple of God early in the morning, and taught such devout worshippers as did appear. But the (g) high priest came, and they that were similarly inclined with him, and called the council (h) for religious matters together, and all the senate of age and experience (i) belonging to the children of Israel, and sent their officers to the prison, to have them whom they still understood to be in confinement there,*

or Caiaphas still, Acts iv. 6. (b) Comp. Acts xxiii. 6, 8. iv. 1. (c) Or bitter envy; comp. Rom. x. 2. James iii. 14. (d) See Mat. i. 2c. xxviii. 2. Acts xii. 1c. (e) Referring to Acts ii. 14. iv. 18.; comp. 2 Cor. i. 24. Col. iv. 12. (f) Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 19. John vi. 68. Acts xiii. 26. 2 Tim. i. 10: yet pride, selfishness, and policy overlook every thing miraculous. (g) See chap. iv. 6. v. 17. (h) Or Sanhedrim, composed of about 70 elders, or senators, mostly priests and lawyers. (i) From other places besides Jerusalem;

#### REFLECTIONS.

wise policy. To threaten and distress is the common method of bigots and wicked men. <sup>b</sup> The political look not beyond this present world, and are exceedingly zealous of their authority. <sup>c</sup> Angels of benevolence delight in kind offices. They who have no help of men even in a good cause, are most the objects of divine regard. <sup>d</sup> Some hearts are too high, even for the discipline of divine wisdom, Luke vii. 30.; Comp. John xviii. 6. xii. 10. Prejudice will hurry the mind into the most fatal extravagances; Mat. x. 18. xxvii. 34. Those who deny a future state will ever be the constant and implacable enemy:



brought out for trial and punishment. But when the officers came *thither*, and found them not in the prison-house, they returned, under great surprise, to the assembly, and told the plain fact, saying, 'The prison truly found we shut with all appearances of safety, and the keepers, agreeable to their late orders (*j*), standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within.' Now, when the (*k*) high priest, and (*l*) the captain of the temple, and the other chief of the priests heard these strange things (*m*), they, in perplexity, doubted of them at length whereunto this would grow. Then came one, and very unexpectedly likewise told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison, so late as last evening, are this moment standing in the open temple, and teaching, with as much freedom and confidence as ever, the people there. Then went the captain of the temple, with the inferior (*n*) officers, and brought them by direction, under a guard of soldiers, but without doing any farther violence (*o*) to their persons (for they feared the numbers of ingenuous\* people who were hearers, lest, by giving such provocation, they should have been instantly stoned). And when they had brought them up from the temple, they set them again as pannels before the council: and the high priest sternly asked them, saying, Did not we your legal superiors, straitly (*p*) command you, with certification, that you should not any longer† teach in this

see chap. iv. 5. Mat. x. 17 (*j*) Hence the miracle so much greater. (*k*) Gr. priest simply; by way of eminence; so 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 20. (!) See chap. iv. 1. (*m*) So think a succession of miracles, and all against them, did greatly confound; comp. chap. v. 2, 12 x. 17. (*n*) See John vii. 32, 45 xviii. 12. The apostles, therefore, were not conscious to themselves of having done, or, at that time doing any evil. (*o*) Comp. Mat. xxvii. 2. (*p*) See

## REFLECTIONS.

of Christianity. \* We should not, in any wise, seem to despise public authority † Tyrants urge express orders, in the place of all reason. Charges of disobedience and false accusations are often conjoined. The holy word of God can never be ef-

*bated imposers name? And yet, disdainful of our clear and positive edict, behold, ye have filled (q) to the utmost of your power Jerusalem itself with your false doctrine, and intend manifestly by that means, to bring (r) the guilt and punishment of this base<sup>s</sup> man's blood upon us who did so righteously crucify him.*

#### SECT. XXIV. FROM VERSE XXIX.

THEN Peter, warmed with pure zeal, and the other apostles by him, answered and said, We (a) ought surely to obey God<sup>a</sup> who is infinite, rather than men even of the highest rank. Besides (b), it is proper for you who now judge to reflect, that the God of our pious (c) fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, raised up (d) both to office and glorious reigning power, that same Jesus, whom ye lately slew by the hands of others, and (e) ignominiously hanged on a tree. Him verily thus shockingly used of untoward men, hath God, ever true and faithful to his word, exalted with his omnipotent right hand to the highest heavens, to be a (f) prince and a Saviour, for to

chap. iv. 17, 18. ; they scorn to take it in their mouths. (q) This they said not of ignorance, but of malice. (r) Comp. Mat. xxvii. 25. ; they did not, and therefore could not object to any particulars in the Christian doctrine. Falsehood and contumacy are words easily spoken ; comp. Acts ii. 22, 23. iii. 13. iv. 10.

(a) Answer to the charge of disobedience, ver. 28. This, though indirectly, threw the guilt of innocent blood upon the Jewish council ; see chap. iv. 19. comp. chap. xxvii. 21. (b) Answer to the charge of false accusation, ver. 29. (c) See chap. iii. 13. hereby they are reminded of ancient promises. (d) See chap. iii. 15, 26. x. 40. (e) Comp. Deut. xvi. 22, &c. (f) Or leader ; see chap. xxvii. 21. A princely one ; John viii. 54. Acts ii. 33, 36. Heb. ii. 10.

#### REFLECTIONS.

factually bound up by human will or policy. <sup>s</sup> Words of high sound do very often contain little or no matter of defence. Truth must not be kept in silence for the sake of wicked men's credit.

<sup>a</sup> He is able to punish much more than they ; comp. Dan. iii. 17, 18. Acts iv. 19. Socrates in Plato and Herodotus use nearly the same words. Subjects and servants are to obey only

give time<sup>b</sup>, place, and all proper means for (g) repentance to the posterity of old Israel (h), and in that only safe way forgiveness of sins past, however great. And we, whom he hath chosen to preach in his name, are his appointed<sup>c</sup> witnesses (i) upon clear grounds of these great (j) things; and so is also the (k) Holy Ghost to you, in his manifold miraculous gifts, as well as those whom God hath immediately given to them that (l) lay aside prejudice, repent, and obey<sup>d</sup> him.

### SECT. XXV. FROM VERSE XXXIII.

WHEN they of the court heard that courageous testimony, and could make to it no consistent return, they were (a) cut to the heart with indignation and grief; and in place of amending they hardened, and<sup>a</sup> took counsel by themselves, to (b) slay them one way or other. Then stood there up a celebrated one in the council, who could not be brought by the rest to this severe and highly criminal measure, a pharisee (c) who believed the existence

Hence the Jewish guilt became conspicuous, Dan ix. 25. (g) As in Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 38, 39. (h) Or Jacob, John vi. 31. (i) See chap. i. 8. ii. 32 (j) Or words, as in Luke i. 37. ii. 15. (k) Comp. John xv. 26, 27. Heb. ii. 3, 4. Acts ii. 17. (l) See Mark xvi. 17.

(a) As with a saw; comp. 2 Sam. xii. 31. Acts vii. 54. (b) If not under form of law, as in the case of Christ, by mobbish violence, as in the case of Stephen. Perhaps they threatened this so as to be easily understood, whence verse 34. Even in the case of malefactors a sentence of death ought to be well deliberated. (c) See Acts xxiii. 8. Therefore more apt to be conscientious.

### REFLECTIONS.

in the Lord; against whom human orders are to be neglected, despised. <sup>b</sup> The way to forgiveness and eternal life is now open to every man. God doth not force repentance, nor can any be saved without it. <sup>c</sup> As there can be no obedience without faith, so there can be no true faith without obedience. <sup>d</sup> A steadfast testimony, in the face of severe threatenings and troubles, is full proof of sincerity. The resurrection and ascension of Christ are fundamental articles. To oppose these, no method was left untried.

<sup>a</sup> To persecute, and even to put to death, is the common

*of men beyond death, named Gamaliel (d), a learned doctor of the law; had in reputation for integrity, no less than wisdom, among all the people who knew him; and (e) commanded to put the apostles forth of their company a little space, lest in their own hearing he should be thought to favour what they had done; and said unto them who were members of the court, Ye leading men of Israel, who have care of the public weal, take heed to yourselves what ye now so manifestly intend<sup>b</sup> to do as touching these two men, who have been criminally charged and also punished in part. For, you ought to consider, how, before these (f) days in which we live, rose up (g) Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody of eminence, and who had commission to deliver the Jews from servitude; to whom a number of men to the extent of about four hundred quickly joined themselves; who was slain by the Roman forces with ease, and all, even as many (h) as obeyed him, from rash faith and impatience of a foreign yoke, were (i) scattered hither and thither, and entirely<sup>c</sup> brought to nought. After this man rose up (j) Judas*

(d) See chap. xxii. 3. (e) See chap. iv. 15. (f) Times or years. Political men support themselves by examples, especially recent ones. (g) Many such, and even of that name too, there had been before the death of Herod the Great, *Joseph. Ant. l. xx. c. 12.*; others after, *l. xvii. 12.*; comp. *Acts viii. 9.* *1 Cor. iii. 7.* (h) Believed. (i) As is common to those who have lost their head. Far otherwise was the case of Jesus of Nazareth, *Mat. xvi. 18.* (j) Comp. *Joseph. Ant. l. xviii. c. 1, 2. chap. 11.* *Bell. Ind. l. ii. c. 11.* Between these and the apostles there were the following material differences: 1st, The one extolled themselves, the other not, but preached Jesus. 2d, The one promised to do great things, the other did them. 3d, The one acted under arms, the other by doctrines, reasons, and miracles. 4th, The one acted

#### REFLECTIONS.

resource of enemies to the truth. Cruelty succeeds to lying. What ought to allure doth often more incense the malicious. <sup>b</sup> Rash and ill-timed zeal needs a proper check. What is expedient for time to come, may be wisely determined from things past. <sup>c</sup> It is a sure mark of seditious zeal to rise up rashly against legal authority, *Mat. xxvi. 52.* To oppose pure gospel is a fatal error, and virtually to fight against God, *Psal.*

of Galilee, in the days of the *late enrolment for taxing, under Archelaus the son of Herod*, and drew away, by his address, like the former, much people after him, to make them free: he also miserably perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were soon dispersed. And now, after serious deliberation, I say unto you, in great earnest, refrain from abusing and hurting<sup>d</sup> these men more than you have done; and, if you will, let them quite alone (k): for if this counsel which has been declared, or this work which has arisen out of it, be of men only, it will soon come to nought even as the former two: but if, on the other hand, it be of God, ye cannot by any means of policy or power whatever expect (l) to overthrow it. Moreover, the attempt would be no less impious than vain (m), lest haply, fighting against them, ye likewise be (n) found in the most certain dreadful manner, even to fight against an Almighty and insuperable God. And, unable to elude the force of what he said, to him for the time they agreed (p), against an immediate purpose of putting them to death: and when they had called the apostles back to the place where they were assembled (q),

against civil laws and public quiet, the other not. (k) If he was not averse to Christ's disciples, he must naturally have been mild and modest, or still dream of a temporal deliverance. (l) His power and wisdom are illimited; Prov. xxi. 30. To incline resistance is impious, prejudicial; comp. Job xxvi. 5, Prov. ix. 18. xxi. 16. (m) Comp. Gen. iv. 22. (n) Appear plainly, as in Mat. i. 18.; comp. Acts xxiii. 9. (o) See ver. 33. (p) By this, they would seem consistent before the people; comp. chap. xxii. 19. 2 Cor. xi. 24. Mat. x. 17. Mark xii. 5. Luke x. 10, 11.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ii. 10. <sup>d</sup> In doctrinal matters, which concern not the order of state, spiritual means alone ought to be tried, see Mat. xv. 13. The apostles, unsupported by human power, could not have abode for any time. It is the duty of all to examine into doctrines fairly and peaceably proposed; and, after that, to rest the whole with God. No means save what are lawful, ought any one to use, 2 Cor. x. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 24. Most disputes, among Christians are about non-essentials. Confidence is no sign of truth but of sincerity; which knows not what it is to persecute.

and beaten <sup>c</sup> them *with rods, for disobeying former illegal orders, they commanded anew, and with more rigorous certifications than ever, that they should not dare to speak in the name of their favourite Jesus; and thus let them go.*

## SECT. XXVI. FROM VERSE XLI.

AND they, *though under much bodily pain, departed from the presence of the Jewish council, rejoicing in spirit that they were, (a) counted worthy of so great honour as <sup>a</sup> to suffer shame and loss for his blessed name's sake. And, far from obeying iniquitous orders, daily in the public temple, and in every private (b) house which they had access to, they ceased not to teach, from morning to night, the pure evangelical doctrine; and, regardless of human interdicts, threatenings and scourges <sup>b</sup>, to preach (c) Jesus Christ its glorious and exalted author.*

(a) Admirable resolution! Their affront was probably given in the market place; see Mat. v. 11, 12. (b) See chap. ii. 46. (c) Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. i. 16, 18. Or, that Jesus was the Christ.

## REFLECTIONS.

More is obtained by moderate counsels, than by fierce outrage. Even good advice ought to be given with discretion and civility: <sup>c</sup> Truths manifest and incontestible have often drawn down the indignation of ecclesiastics! In cases of this sort, differences and even tumults are a necessary evil. To convert people, we should give them Christianity in its simplicity. Reasons of state, lead judges too often to act against their own conviction; yet is there few evils so great. Infamous punishment is rendered glorious by a good cause. It is the delight of pious souls to approve themselves faithful in midst of injuries.

<sup>a</sup> A good cause in affliction, is comfort unspeakable, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 9. James i. 2, 12. Christ Jesus often uses the blood of choice servants for propagating his glory, Phil. i. 28, 29. No persons, in their sound mind, choose to suffer on account of what they know to be false. <sup>b</sup> To preach Christ, is to preach his word. True ministers must not slacken in duty from being opposed.

## C H A P. VI.

## SECT. XXVII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND in those days of which we have been speaking, when the number of the disciples of Christ<sup>a</sup> was multiplied, there arose a murmuring at first, with subsequent complaints, and even indignation, of the Grecians (a) and other gentiles who had been converted, against the native (b) Hebrews of Judea, because certain of their widows were neglected as to allowance in the daily (c) ministrations of what they should live upon. Then the twelve (d) apostles having come to the knowledge of this, called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said; by one or more of their number, It is not reason (e), that we, who have so much greater work upon our hands<sup>b</sup>;

(a) Comp. Mark vii. 26. Acts xiv. 1. xviii. 4. xix. 10. xx. 21, 1 Cor. i. 22, &c. After the time of Ezra the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read to the Jews in the original Hebrew; and interpreted in Chaldee, where they had so long lived; or Greek. Grecians, here spoken of, might be those who were born in other countries, who used only the Greek language, and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament; or stranger proselytes. (b) The posterity of Abraham, Phil. iii. 5. Of these two, the Christian church at Jerusalem was constituted. Or, overlooked. (c) Comp. Mat. viii. 15. Luke viii. 3. John xii. 1. Acts xi. 29. Rom. xv. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 19, 20. Perhaps, as yet, they were not permitted to minister to the faithful. (d) They were all understood to be equal in governing. Matthias was now added. (e) Agreeable, or meet.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> With increase of numbers, servour of unanimity do too often abate; comp. Acts ii. 44. iv. 32. <sup>b</sup> What is most necessary and excellent, upon the whole, ought to be preferred. Spiritual men should beware of distracting their minds too much with secular business. Numbers of wise and good people, strengthen authority. In the case of differences, a proper number should be chosen out of each body. In every church, there ought to be one or more invested with official power, for duly executing the laws of Christ, Eph. iv. xi. 16. Rom. x. 14. Tit. i. 5. They are to be qualified, 1 Tim. v. 22. iii. 2, 8. Tit. i. 6, 9. Called by providence, and the approbation

should leave off preaching the glorious word of God for saving human souls, and give any large share of our time to serve (f) at tables their more immediate bodily wants. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you, who bear us declare divine truths from above, seven men, of (g) honest report<sup>c</sup> for good living, full of the (h) Holy Ghost in frequent manifested acts (i), and wisdom of prudence, agreeable to each, whom, at your desire<sup>d</sup>, we may appoint over this inferior, and yet highly commendable business. But, as for us, we will (j), being expressly ordained to that end, give ourselves continually to prayer, both in public and private<sup>e</sup>, and to the ministry of the gospel-word.

(f) See chap. ii. 46 (g) Comp. 1 Tim. iii. 7. &c. Their number might be adapted to different places for instruction and worship. (h) Or a divine zeal. (i) Or spiritual wisdom. (j) See Math. xxviii. 19, 20.

#### REFLECTIONS.

of the church, Heb. v. 4. Rom. x. 15. 1 Pet. v. 2. <sup>c</sup> Thus, from occasional evils, good laws arise. In a great multitude, troubles and confusion must ensue, except divers offices be distributed among divers persons. Ministers and people should, as much as possible, act in concert with each other. Work properly divided, secures harmony and good order. The trust of distributing charities, is a very solemn one. Those societies are blessed, who have most of the Christian temper; or graces and virtues of the Spirit. We must testify our love to Christ, in his poor remaining members upon earth. <sup>d</sup> A devout heart with care and diligence in teaching, are essential qualities in gospel ministers, Acts xx. 28, 36 Col. i. 9. 1 Thess. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Pet. v. 2. James v. 14, 15. Servants of Christ, have no power to make new laws. Obedience to pastors is not blind, implicit, absolute; but rational, reverent, conscientious. Secular affairs of the church, belong most immediately to deacons, Acts xi. 30. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 3. Acts iv. 35. xi. 29, 38. They who live in a state of nearness to God, are best qualified to speak in his name. <sup>e</sup> Pious moderate and liberal men, if not beloved by a malevolent world; are least censured by it. It is laudible, to aim at possessing the friendship of virtuous men.



## SECT. XXVIII. FROM VERSE V.

AND the *propofal* made in the above faying, pleased the whole *Chriftian* (a) multitude : and they forthwith chofe, for *apoftolical approbation*, Stephen, a man full of lively (b) faith, and powers of the Holy (c) Ghof, and (d) Philip, and (e) Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas (f), a profelyte to the *Chriftian religion*, of Antioch ; whom they fet before the apoftles, as *prime and neceffary directors* : and, judging them to be every way fit, when they had prayed to Almighty God, for further ability and fuccefs, they laid their (g) hands on them, in *visible testimony of acceptance, and divine ordination*<sup>a</sup>. And, that ground of complaint thus removed, the preaching of the word of God by the apoftles, and others after their example, increafed mightily ; and the number of the difciples (h), by this means, multiplied, even in Jerufalem, greatly : and a great company of the <sup>b</sup> *Jewifh* priefts (i) *themselves, regardless of*

(a) Or church then. (b) See ver. 7. Rom. i. 5. Gal. i. 23. 1 Tim. iii. 9. (c) Comp. ver. iii. 8, 10. Stephen was firft, or chief of the whole. (d) Different from the apoftle; fee chap. viii. 5, 12, 26. (e) All Greek names, and from that clafs the better to prevent murmurings. (f) A Jew by religion, but not by birth. (g) Ancient rite, Numb. xxvii. 18, 23. Continued among Chriftians; Acts xiii 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14. (h) Called afterwards Chriftians, chap. xi. 26. (i) Comp. John vii. 46, 47. xii. 42. Rom. i. 5. Jude 3, 20. Rev. i. 13.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Sanctity, patience, and miracles, were the grand caufes of evangelical progreff. To get over the defire of praife, from men, and fear of their difpleafure, argues ftrong faith, efpecially in high office. It is certain the Chriftian religion hath characters of truth and divinity, which have no dependence at all upon the authority of the church. To make the votes of many a fure character of truth, would give a fanction to all the falfe religions in the world, which have the multitude on their fide. <sup>b</sup> It is not fafe in point of confcience, to receive courtesies from the world. They muft lay down their pride, with all their former evil doings, who would fubmit to the

*former prejudice and present temporal loss, were obedient to the pure gospel faith. And Stephen, in particular, full of earnest (j) faith and divine power, did great wonders and miracles of mercy among the people.*

## SECT. XXIX. FROM VERSE IX.

THEN, *notwithstanding*, there arose (a) certain of the synagogue in *Jerusalem*, which is called the synagogue of the (b) Libertines, and Cyrenians, and (c) Alexandrians, and of them of (d) Cilicia, and of Asia the Less, disputing (e) upon religious matters, with keen opposition to Stephen \*. And (f), spite of their whole united endeavours, they were not able to resist the heavenly scripture (g) wisdom, and the spirit of Almighty God in him, by which he spake. Then, finding themselves overcome by fair argument, they, clandestinely and basely, suborned men to swear against him (h), which said, in solemn public judgement, We have heard him, once and again, speak blasphemous words against <sup>b</sup> Mo-

(j) Many MSS. read grace.

(a) See chap. v. 17. 34. Many of these lesser religious societies there were in the capital, and throughout Judea, Mat. iv. 23. Some of them were kinds of colleges, for training up youth to theological knowledge. (b) Probably from their being made free. Liberti, or Libertini; that is citizens of Rome: some, from the place of their meeting. (c) From Alexandria in Egypt. (d) Whereof Tarsus was the metropolis, and birth place of Paul. Situated on the Mediterranean coast; now the eastern division of Carmania in Asiatic Turkey. (e) His fervour might carry him to them; or, perhaps, till of late, he was one of themselves. (f) For but. (g) Comp. Mat. x. 20. Some, the wisdom of the Spirit; like spiritual fire, or fire and spirit. (h) Like 1 Kings xxi. 13. He might have said, that the law was inferior to the gospel, and Moses to

## REFLECTIONS.

sweet yoke of the gospel. The rapid progress of the gospel, is one great argument for its divine original. The happiest of all purchases, is this enriching treasure Heb. x. 23.

\* Excellent virtue procureth itself envy. <sup>b</sup> Enemies of truth, who cannot refuse arguments, fly to calumny, false accusation, and violence. The most innocent words may, and have often

ses our eminent lawgiver, and against the most high God also, who called him to office. And, through time, with zealous secret machinations, they stirred up many of the loose and ignorant people, and the elders of rank, and the more popular kind of scribes to head them; and came upon him, with joint violence, and caught him, as an evil doer, and brought him, under fierce incessant threatenings, from where he (i) taught, to the full assembled supreme council. And, regardless of justice at heart, though willing to observe the legal forms of it, they set up their provided false witnesses<sup>c</sup>, which said, agreeable to previous direction, This man, now standing before you, ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy (j) place, both of our country and temple, and even against the blessed (k) law itself. For, among other things, we have heard him say, That this Jesus of Nazareth (l), whom you did put to death, for an attempt to mislead the weak and credulous multitude, is yet alive, and that, ere long, he shall (m) destroy this sacred place of ours, and shall change the ritual customs(n) which Moses, by undoubted supernatural authority, delivered us, through those we are each of us sprung from. And then, soon as the heinous charge was advanced, all that sat in the high council, as judges, looking steadfastly on him whom malice did strive to intimidate (o), saw his face, under the confidence of truth<sup>d</sup> and a glorious cause,

Christ. (i) Comp. ver. ix. 10. (j) See Mat. iv. 5. xxvii. 53. (k) See ver. 14. (l) Emphatically contemptuous; see Psal. lii. (m) See Mat. xxvii. 21. Mark xiv. 58. Dan. ix. 26, 27. (n) See Mal. i. & ii. (o) Similar to Gen. 33. 10. 1 Sam. xxix. 9. Eith. xv. 11. Resembling that of Moses in particular, when he came down from the Mount, Exod. xxxiv. 29. They who could resist Acts iv. 16. might resist this.

## REFLECTIONS.

been wickedly represented, Mat. xxvi. 65. comp. 1 Sam. xxi. 6, 9. 2 Sam. xxii. 9, 10. Like inventions were practised against our blessed Lord. How heinous is the crime of malice, under a pretence of love for religion. Steadfastness in a good cause, is the severest rebuke to shameless falsehood.<sup>c</sup> The most cautious, will not always escape the censure of malice. Their cause, in the end, God will not fail to vindicate.<sup>d</sup> Gravity

*serene, pleasant, and even refulgent, as though it had been the face of an angel.*

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## CHAP. VII.

### SECT. XXX. FROM VERSE I.

**T**HEN, *with an air of calm justice*, said the <sup>a</sup> high priest, *Are these things now sworn to, even so to your own conviction? And what have you to answer by way of defence? And he said, at some length, but all along in the softest manner (a), Men, brethren, and fathers of the Jewish line, be pleased to hearken whilst I remind you of*

(a) Things not belonging to gospel, were left to speakers and writers themselves, *Hier.* see Acts xxii. 1. Distinctly expressive of his Hebrew original. First he addresses the people, and then their rulers. The speech is long, noble, and affectionate. Though at our distance of time, it needs illustrative hints; it will be admired by all who well understand it. Perhaps Stephen would have enlarged upon some articles, says a learned pious author, and given a clear improvement of the whole, had he not met with furious interruption. His full design is, though obliquely, to prove that the favour of God is restricted to no place, even tabernacle or temple; and that the Jews had no right of preference, in themselves.

### REFLECTIONS.

joined with sweetness, is peculiarly captivating; and, in dangers, argues a good state of mind. The cheerfulness and majesty of innocence, looks angel like.

<sup>a</sup> Sentences in judgement, ought to be framed according to law. No person is bound to accuse himself. A defence ought to be heard with calmness and impartiality. It is no blasphemy to set forth the preference, even in things that are good. To strive obstinately against the known will of God, is to hate, and even to blaspheme his authority and love. We should not think ourselves indifferently treated, if that come to pass which others have been tried with; and of which divine wisdom hath forewarned. Wrathful charges must be answered with calm reason, meek and powerful arguments; comp. Mat. x. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 23. Remarkable facts should be reflected up-

*some important things: The <sup>b</sup> God of glory (b) long before our law and residence here, and whom we all adore; appeared by a majestic symbol, you well know, unto our venerable father <sup>c</sup> Abraham, when he was yet with his idolatrous ancestors in the (c) land of Mesopotamia, before he had dwelt in Charran, and said (d) unto him, Get thee out of this thy native country, and from thy kindred, who are now alienated from my worship, and come into the pleasant, excellent land which I shall (e) afterwards shew thee. Then, without questioning the divine right, or doubting the truth of his promise, came (f) he out of Ur, in the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt for several years, in (g) Charran: and from thence (h), by a like heavenly order, when his father was dead, he removed him into this part of the (i) land of Canaan, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him, at that time, none inheritance in it, no, not so much of this (j) sort of property, as to set his foot on: yet he (k) pro-*

(b) Or most glorious God, Psal. xxix. 3. Wise return to the accusation of blasphemy. (c) Lying between the river Tigris and Euphrates; and comprehending Chaldea, wherein Babylon was. Beyond this, lay Ur, signifying Fire; which was worshipped there, with other strange gods: comp. verse iv. Josh. xxiv. 2. (d) Gen. xii. 1. Or had said, God loved Abraham himself, and not the place whither he led him. (e) Not named the more to try his faith. (f) Heb. xi. 8. To be imitated, when need is in leaving country, friends, and all outward advantages, for true faith, and a good conscience. (g) See verse ii. (h) Gen. xi. 32. (i) Near Hebron, belonging to the tribe of Judah; and about forty years after his departure from Charran. (j) Comp. Deut. ii. 5. Gen. xxiii. 16, 17. (k) See Gen.

## REFLECTIONS.

on with devout affections. <sup>b</sup> To God the Father, all glory is due. <sup>c</sup> We should imitate the obedience of those whom we make our boast of. Like Abraham, let us be ready to leave every thing in this world, when God shall give the signal for it, Heb. vi. 11, 12. xii. 1. While we follow infinite wisdom, we cannot wander out of the way of true happiness. What avail signs and wonders, among the incorrigible? In different ages and circumstances, positive and external rites have been different; and holiness was not confined originally to one particular place. We ought not to be over anxious for our posterity.

misfed, in *some future time*, to give it *wholly* to him for a *lasting* possession, and to his (l) seed after him, when, as yet, being *well stricken in years*<sup>d</sup>, he had no (m) child *whatever*, nor was likely to have one. And, moreover, God spake (n) to him, even then by vision, on this wise, That his seed should sojourn, as *foreigners*, in a (o) strange land: and that they *whose property it was*, should bring them into a *state of bondage*, and intreat them *very evil* (p) during four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in *such miserable bondage*, will I at length *severely* (q) judge, said the *same holy and righteous* God: and after that shall they come forth out of that land free, and be in good condition to serve me in this very place.

### SECT. XXXI. FROM VERSE VIII.

AND he gave him the *solemn covenant-memorial* of (a) circumcision, for an earnest that he was to be the father of many nations: and so Abraham quickly afterwards (b) begat Isaac, and<sup>a</sup> circumcised him also on the

xii. 7. xiii. 15. (l) Or issue. (m) A singular trial; but, at length, fully made out. (n) Gen. xv. 13. (o) Viz. Egypt, verse xvii. 19, 34. (p) A general round sum. The computation to begin from near the time in which God now spake. comp. Ex. xii. 40 Gal. iii. 17. (q) Punish; 2 Chron. xx. 12. Psa ix. 20. Hos. v. 1. From a large account of the divine goodness toward the Jews; he meant to infer their ingratitude the more strongly.

(a) Gen xvii 10. Circumcision, therefore, was not the cause of the divine promise. (b) Here began the accomplishments, Gen. xxi. 2, &c. comp. Rom. iv. 11. Neither was Isaac, a cause of the

### REFLECTIONS.

ty; but see to their spiritual improvement. <sup>d</sup> True faith triumphs over all seeming difficulties; and joyfully embraces the divine revelation and promise.

<sup>a</sup> The Mosaic rites, whereof circumcision was the chief, are by no means necessary to justification, Rom. iv. 10, 11. They are peculiarly bound to obey God, who have a seal of his promise. Holiness and acceptance with him, do not depend upon families, times, and places. Temporal prosperity and

eight day from his birth; and Isaac begat and (c) circumcised Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve heads of Jewish tribes, commonly named patriarchs. And the body of those patriarchs <sup>b</sup>, moved with cruel envy (e) sold their brother Joseph for a slave, to be carried into Egypt: but God, when he was thus divided from all his friends, and had gone through great sufferings, was eminently (f) with him; and, by astonishing means, in (g) the end delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him high favour and suitable (h) wisdom of every kind, to conduct himself in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt<sup>c</sup>: and he at length made him (i) governor over the land of Egypt, and all the chief servants in his own royal house, till then. Now, by divine ordination (j), there came, even as Joseph had foretold, a severe dearth over all the land of Egypt, and reached to Chanaan (k), and great affliction (l) by that means: and our fathers, who then lived in the last of these, found no sufficient sustenance of any kind. But when Jacob heard that there was corn to be spared in

promises. (c) Gen. xxv. 24, &c. (d) Gen. xxix. 32. chap. xxxiii. viz. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zabulon, by Leah; Joseph, Benjamin, by Rachael; Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, by Zilpah, Leah's servant maid. Heads of the tribes, comp. chap. iii. 27. Heb. vii. 4. (e) Gen. xxi. 4, &c. So did their posterity the Jews, through envy, deliver up Jesus to be crucified. What the Midianites did, Joseph's brethren were the cause of. (f) Gen. xxxix. 21, 23. comp. Gen. i. (g) Gen. xli. 14. So was he often with those whom they injured. (h) Or, from his wisdom, Gen. xli. 39. (i) Gen. xli. 40, 44. (j) Gen. xli. 54. personified. (k) Called from Cham, the grand child of Noah, Gen. ix. 6, 15. Called Palestine also, the Red Sea parting it from Egypt. (l) Gen.

#### REFLECTIONS.

the favour of the multitude, is not always the lot of his people. By laying down the premises, St. Stephen left his audience to draw the proper inferences, just as our Lord did, when he spake in parables. <sup>b</sup> The greatest favourites of heaven, may suffer by a like envy, even of those who are called the Israel of God. Let us judge nothing before the time. <sup>c</sup> Thus God often converts designed evil, unto good, Gen. i. 20. So did the sufferings and death of Christ lead to his glorious exaltation, with its numerous, beneficial fruits. From hence, the

Egypt, he sent out *thither* our fathers (*m*) first. And at the second time *of their mission, having Benjamin to accompany them*, Joseph, *who had inquired into their history, and fully discovered them*, was made known *also* to his brethren; and, *not long after that*. Joseph's kindred was made known (*n*) *by him* unto king Pharaoh. Then, sent Joseph, *with his full consent*, and (*o*) called his aged father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, *from the land of Chanaan* (*p*), *to the extent of three score and fifteen souls*. So Jacob, *under heavenly direction*, went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, *at that time*; And *their remains* were carried<sup>d</sup> over *from thence* again into (*q*) Sychem *of Judea*, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham (*r*) bought for a sum of money of the sons of (*s*) Emmor, the father of Sychem.

xliii. 1, 8. (*m*) Gen. lxii. 1, &c. (*n*) Gen. xlv. 3, 16. So Jesus, almost quite unknown to the Jews at first, was, afterwards, made more known by the preaching of his apostles; and will yet, most of all. (*o*) As in Gen. xlv. 21, 27. (*p*) Gen. xlv. 3. &c. xlix. 33. In which seem not to have been comprehended the two grandchildren of Judah, nor yet Joseph and his two sons, nor wives of Jacob's children, Gen. xvi. 26, 27. (*q*) Named from the son of Zohar, situated upon the side of Mount Gerizim, and belonging to the tribe of Ephraim; comp. Gen. xlvii. 30. l. 13, 24, 25. Joseph. l. 2. c. 4. Ant. (*r*) In the sepulchre which the son, or descendant of Abraham bought for a sum of money, of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. This was a testimony of their faith in the divine promise; see Gen. xxiii. 16. xxxiii. 19. (*s*) Or descendants. Small differences may easily be accounted for.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Jews ought to have abated of their hard thoughts concerning Jesus of Nazareth; whom, through envy, they delivered. <sup>d</sup> If it be considered how ancient the books of the Old and New Testament are, and how often they have been transcribed, it will not be wondered that some difficulties should arise; though there be very few, or none, but what may easily be rectified, in matters of moment. Stephen, at times, may seem to deviate from his subject, yet still he loses not sight of it. It is a high reward of distinguished virtue, to have an opportunity of sweetening the even of life to pious parents.



## SECT. XXXII. FROM VERSE XVII.

BUT when the time of *fulfilling* the (a) promise drew nigh, which God, in *effect*, had sworn to Abraham, the people of *Israel*, from *so small a beginning*, grew and multiplied *exceedingly* in Egypt, till another king arose (b) and reigned, which knew not, *so as to lay to heart, the numerous and great services of Joseph*. The same prince dealt *subtiley and basely* with our *Israelitish* kindred, and (c) *to a great degree*, evil-intreated our fathers, so that they (d) cast out their young-born male children, to the end *that they might not continue to live in such numbers*. In which *dreadful* time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair (e) *to look upon* (f), and nourished up *secretly* in his *affectionate* father's house three months: and when he *could no longer be hid*, but was cast out, in a *small pitched basket*, upon *flags which grew by the waters of Nile*, Pharoah's daughter *providentially* took him up *from thence*<sup>a</sup>, and, in *tender love of compassion* (g), nourished him *up to be adopted* for her own son. And Moses, *by the same good care*, was learned in all the *wide circle of arts and sciences*, which the (h) wisdom of the Egyptians then was famous for<sup>b</sup>;

(a) Gen. xiii. 16, &c. xv. 14, 15. An oath put for a strong asseveration. Maimon. (b) Josephus says, the kingdom was translated into another family, Exod. i. 10. (c) See Exod. i. 11, 14, 22. Psal. cv. 24.; comp. ver. 17, 18. (d) Or caused them to be exposed, from dread of their being killed, ver. 21. (e) Or, fair to God. A divine beauty, Exod. ii. 10. A gift of heaven, see 2 Cor. x. 4. Or Hebrew superlative, like Jon. iii. 3. So trees of God. (f) See Exod. ii. 2. (g) She is said to have employed the mother of the child herself, for that purpose. In whole, a wonderful providence, and fit to excite attention to what follows. See Ex. ii. 10. (h) At this time they were famous for mathematics, music, astronomy, knowledge of nature, ethics, and politics; and many Greek

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> From small beginnings, it pleases Almighty God very often to draw forth a train of the most important consequences.  
<sup>b</sup> Even without divine revelation, Moses was admirably qualified

and was mighty in (i) *skilful* words, and in *great beneficial and heroic* deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart, *by a divine impulse*, to visit *those whom he knew to be his oppressed* (j) brethren, the children of *pious* Israel. And seeing one of them suffer *an extreme degree of* (k) wrong, *from an Egyptian taskmaster* <sup>c</sup>, he *bravely* defended him, and avenged the *cause of* him that was *so iniquitously* oppressed, and smote the Egyptian till he died: for he supposed, *from that success, and what he felt in his own mind so strongly directing him to such an equitable hazardous measure*, his Hebrew brethren would have understood how that *Almighty* God, *ere long*, by his hand (l) would, *after a similar manner*, deliver them all; but, *from stupid carelessness*, they understood not, *so as righteously to acknowledge the same*. And the next day he again shewed himself unto two of them, as they violently strove, and would (m) have set them at one again, *from their mutual bitter railing* (n) and blows <sup>d</sup>, saying, *Sirs, ye are brethren by blood and country together, besides what you suffer from a cruel common enemy; Why do ye wrong, then, after this unnatural method, one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong, becoming worse than ever by so plain and faithful a reproof* (o), thrust him away with contempt, saying, *And who, pray, made thee a ruler and a judge*

philosophers went thither to be improved. (i) Similar to Luke xxiv. 19. An able man in discourse and action. (j) For this end, he left the king's palace, affluence, and honours; comp. Heb. xi. 24, &c. (k) See Exod. ii. 11, 12. (l) Or was giving them a salvation. (m) Or would have obliged them to peace; comp. Luke xiv. 23. (n) Comp. Exod. ii. 13. (o) Thus did they likewise set at

#### REFLECTIONS.

to write. <sup>c</sup> Barbarous acts ought ever to be discouraged. We should express special tender love towards our own country. Generosity is illustrated by contempt of secular ease, and pleasure; Heb. xi. 24, 25. They who are grievously oppressed by others, ought to live the more in peace among themselves. Even in the number of those who are most indebted to us, may be found opposers. <sup>d</sup> Some think themselves wronged by advice, however mild, good, and seasonable; and so become bit-

over us? Wilt thou *indeed* kill me, upon *pretence* of high patriotic zeal, as thou didst for certain, at thine own private hand, the Egyptian yesterday? Then, from fear of discovery, fled Moses at this *ungrateful* saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian (p)<sup>c</sup>, among the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, where (q), by marriage with a daughter of that people, he (r) begat two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

SECT. XXXIII. FROM VERSE XXX.

AND when forty years more of Israel's bondage were expired, there appeared to him, in the wilderness (a) of Mount Sina (b), as he fed cattle, an angel of the Lord (c) *Jehovah* in a (d) flame of fire in the midst of a bush, which (e), though <sup>a</sup> burning, did not consume. When Moses saw it so suddenly kindle, and without any natural means, he wondered at these things, and at the sight of its continuance: and as he drew near to behold it with yet greater advantage, the voice of the Lord (f) came unto him from out of the bush, saying (g), I am the God who took care of thy fathers<sup>b</sup>, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Ja-

thought their deliverer, the Messiah! (p) Or Median; comp. Gen. xxv. 1, 2. (q) See Exod. ii. 21, &c. xviii. 3, 4. (r) Became the father of.

(a) See Exod. iii. 1. from being a courtier. (b) A mountain of Arabia Petrea, in Asia, situated 120 miles east of Grand Cairo in Egypt; and memorable, on account of the law being given to the Jews from thence. (c) Exod. iii. 2. Having high commission, with suitable powers. (d) Denoting vengeance, 2 Thess. i. 8. (e) From Moses' surprise, it seemeth that he had never seen the divine glory before this. (f) Exod. iii. 41. Or, the angel who did represent him. (g) Their eminent benefactor, Mat. xxii. 32. Spo-

REFLECTIONS.

ter towards their best friends. <sup>c</sup> God has some good people every where. <sup>f</sup> The retired shepherd's life, has a suitableness in it for devout and other improving, ripening exercises.

<sup>a</sup> Fit emblem of a preserved church, even amidst the fiercest flames. <sup>b</sup> The compassionating faithful name of God, opens

cob. Then Moses trembled *at so near an approach to divine Majesty*, and durst not *continue longer (h) to behold as he had done*. Then said the Lord to him <sup>c</sup>, put off thy (i) shoes from thy feet, *lest any thing unclean may have stuck to them*; for the place where thou standest is now holy (j) *consecrated ground to the special presence of divine Majesty*. I have seen (k), I have seen indeed, *so as to be moved with pity for the <sup>d</sup> affliction of my chosen people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning under sore oppression*; and am come down *as from above to deliver them by thine hand*. And now, come, and I will send thee (l) into Egypt, *for that important purpose*. This Moses, *observe*, whom they of Israel refused to acknowledge for a kind assistant, saying, *with disdain (m)*, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The very same <sup>c</sup> person did Almighty God send, *even in spite of them*, to be a (n) ruler, and a (o) deliverer from cruel bondage, by the ministering (p) hand of the angel

ken by the angel in the name of his constituent. (h) Exod. iii. 6.; comp. Psal. x. 14. xxii. 19. (i) Or sandals. The manner of both Jews and Mahometans, see Eccl. v. 1. A mark of solemn regard even to princes. (j) So rendered by divine manifestation, Josh. v. 15. (k) Gr. seeing, I have seen; that is, very thoroughly, comp. Job xxvii. 9. (l) Comp. Deut vii. 11. Dan. iii. 29. Or as my messenger, Ex. ii. 23. (m) See verse xxv. 27. To prepare for a severe but just application; verse xi. 52, 53. Mild method of reprehending. (n) Comp. chap. v. 31. (o) Redeemer, or ransomer, as in Matth. xxii. 28. Luke i. 63. Ex. vi. 6. 2 Sam. vii. 23. Psal. lxxvii. 16. iii. 9. A faint shadow of what Christ was. Both were rejected. (p) Comp. Dan. ix. 10.

#### REFLECTIONS.

to glorious lasting hopes, Mat. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 16. <sup>c</sup> Things sacred should be approached with caution, as when people thus walk. <sup>d</sup> Trials are necessary to prove, and fit for rewards. Vain are all attempts of impious and ungrateful men, to frustrate the divine promises, Psal. cv. 8. comp. Gen. xlvii. 25. Signal deliverances from under the rod of the wicked, ought to be a source of grateful and joyful obedience. Here was triumph over idolatry, almost in its head-quarters. Doddridge. Deliverance from trouble, ought to be patiently waited for, in God's good time, and way. <sup>e</sup> The condemnation and suffer-

which appeared to him in the bush. He (*q*), *at length*, whom heaven did thus graciously send, brought them clear out of their troubles, after that he had shewed, under his grand constituent, numerous awful (*r*) wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and more especially in the (*s*) Red Sea, which closed upon, and overwhelmed their keen pursuing foes; and next in the wilderness, where they were miraculously fed and conducted for the space of no less than forty (*t*) years<sup>1</sup>, prior to a fixed settlement in their promised land.

#### SECT. XXXIV. FROM VERSE XXXVII.

THIS is that Moses, *so highly and justly valued by you*, which, in express terms, said unto the children of Israel, a prophet of still greater eminence than what you now have, 'shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, and a lawgiver also (*a*) like unto me; him shall ye respectfully hear (*b*) and obey in my stead. This Moses is he that was chief in the (*c*) church in the various wilderness (*d*) trials, with the (*e*) angel of God,

(*q*) See verse xxxvii. 40. (*r*) See Ex. ch. viii. ix, x. (*s*) From Adam, the surname of Esau, signifying red. The Edomites inhabited the coasts thereof. (*t*) For a like number of years did Jesus, by his apostles, minister to the Jews; in order to bring them to repentance, by faith.

(*a*) Or as myself, Deut. xviii. 15. (*b*) See chap. iii. 12. (*c*) Signifying congregation, or assembly in general; Acts xix. 32. though more ordinarily when met for sacred matters. (*d*) And not in any city, or magnificent temple. (*e*) Ex. xix. 19, 20.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ings of Jesus, are no just excuses for Jewish unbelief, more than in the case of Moses. Unknown to themselves, the enemies of Christ became instruments of his exaltation. The laws of Moses, too, were most wise, his prophecies came to pass, his deeds were wonderful and miraculous. For the people of God we should run all hazards. <sup>1</sup> See notes <sup>d</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> May we all be taught, by such peculiarly enlivening oracles, his doctrine and laws. Still God, in Christ, continues to favour us with his presence, and to own us for his people; which, therefore, will render our ingratitude and guilt worse

which, *under so high authoritative direction*, spake to him in the Mount (*f*) Sina, and with our <sup>b</sup> *covenanting* fathers *then*: who received from Almighty God the (*g*) lively *edictive* oracles to give unto us *their descendants ever after*; to whom, *it must be again repeated*, our ancient Jewish fathers would not hearken, so as to <sup>c</sup> obey; but did often (*h*) *rebelliously* thrust him from them, and in their *stupid ungrateful hearts*, turned *wisfully* <sup>d</sup> back again into the manners of Egypt (*i*), from low sordid motives, saying, at length, unto Aaron the brother of Moses, Make us *visible, conducting, and protecting* (*j*) gods to go before us <sup>e</sup>, such as these we have left: for as for this Moses, which brought us in *so great haste* out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what (*k*) for these many days past is become of him, nor shall we wait for his return. And, even so great a man upon the whole, yielding to their absurd and monstrous impiety, they, by his means;

(*f*) See verse 30. Ex. xxiv. 7, 8. (*g*) Or fit to give life, to a certain degree, comp. 2 Cor. iii. 7. Deut. xxx. 19, 20. Rom. vii. 10. Joh. v. 39. Here was an answer to Acts vi. 11. (*h*) See Ex. xvi. 1, 2, 27. Num. xiv. 2, 40, 44. (*i*) Comp. Ex. xvi. 3. Num. xi. 5. (*j*) Put for one, Ex. xxxiii. 1. Or many images of the same. (*k*) For forty days, he abode on Mount Sinai, and received the divine

#### REFLECTIONS.

than theirs. <sup>b</sup> If king David was not fit to build the temple, because he was a man of blood; how much less fit were the Jews, that such a structure should be continued to them, who murdered the great Messiah, king David's son and Lord? Even before Moses, and without the law, the pious did please God. <sup>c</sup> The same evil principles, lead to the same or like evil actions; and thereby, prove them to be children of their wicked fathers. Rites of themselves, do not purge people from vice; and of course recommend them to God, Psal. l. 8, &c. Isa. i. 11, &c. lviii. 3, 4. Jer. vi. 20. Hos. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 6, &c. The law of God to succeed that of Moses, was to be the most perfect, comp. Isa. ii. 2, &c. xi. 10, 11. Mal. i. 11. <sup>d</sup> They who return to the impurities of the world, after visible professions and vows to the contrary, are peculiarly blameable. God punishes men, by giving them over to their own hearts' lusts. <sup>e</sup> Miserable gods that are made by men.

made *the form of a (l) calf*, in those days of *high obligation*, and offered sacrifice unto the *base (m) inanimate idol*, calling it *their God*: and, by *eating, drinking, and playing*, rejoiced as they could in the *foolish works of their own reproachful hands*. Then God, *most holy and just*, turned away his pleasant countenance from them, and gave them up to *follow their own (n) wicked devices*, and through time to worship religiously, the whole *(o) host of sun, moon, and stars in heaven*; as it is written in the book of *one of the (p) prophets expressly*<sup>f</sup>, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me, *even to me alone*, slain *(q) beasts and other prescribed sacrifices*, by the long space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, *so far from this*, ye even took up *wantonly on your shoulders*, the tabernacle of *cruel (r) Moloch*, and *along with that in procession*, the *painted star of your (s) God Chiun, or Reinphan*, emblematical figures, which ye vainly made to worship them *like other absurd idolaters*: and, for these *impiously base practices*, I will carry you away *by one foe first unto (t) Damascus*; and thereafter, by a *still more powerful*, even beyond Babylon itself. Our fathers were the more *inexcusable*, that they had *free access to the tabernacle of (u) witness in the wilderness*, as he *who did represent the Almighty (x) had appointed*, to hold out

institutes, for Israel's use. (l) Like the Egyptian Apis; and possibly, to conciliate their affection, should they return, Psal. cvi. 19, &c. (m) See Ex. xxxii. 6 Neh ix 18. comp. Isa. xlv. 9. Wisd xv 6, 16, 17. (n) See Rom ii. 24, 26, 28. Psal lxxxii 13. 2 Kings xvii. 6. from bad to worse. (o) Or army. (p) Am. v. 25. comp. Mark ix. 49. (q) Comp Deut. xxxiii. 16, 17. (r) A God of the Ammonites, from Melech, king, see 1 Kings ix 5, 7, 33. Represented by his image sitting. (s) Said to be the Arabian name for Saturn; highest in the planetary system. Tacit. (t) Comp. Deut. vii. 11. Ezek. ix. 10. 2 Kings xvii 6. (u) Or testimony, same as Ex. xxvii. 21, xxix. 11. This was the ark of the testimony, or covenant; and here they were to meet for religious worship: see Num xvii. 4. All which is spoken here with great reverence. He now shews the places of worship to have been various. Comp. Jer. vii. 12. (x) See verse 30, 35, 30.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>f</sup> See preceding reflections, and those which follow.

*their mutual relation, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it exactly according to the fashion (y) that he had seen from him on the Mount : which renowned tabernacle also our fathers that came after those wilderness sojourners, brought in, just as they had received it, with Jesus (z), their succeeding leader to Moses over the river Jordan, into the possession of the (a) Gentiles, whom God, in abhorrence of gross and multiplied crimes, drove out before the face of our fathers, by flight and slaughter together (b), unto the days of pious king<sup>s</sup> David ; who found favour before God (c), amidst many awful difficulties, and desired, under divine direction, to find a more stable, splendid place to this same tabernacle (d) for worshipping the God of truly (e) venerable Jacob. But his petition, for good causes, being refused, the wise and peaceful Solomon (f), son of that great prince, built him an house, by appointment (g), of singular strength and beauty, into which that covenant of the ark was brought. Howbeit, for prevention of all wrong ideas relative to the Almighty, let this be duly weighed, that the Most High (h), far from being taken up with any such splendour, dwelleth not alone in temples made with any human hands ; as saith the*

(y) See Ex. xxv. 40. (z) Afterwards named Joshua ; the famous commander who succeeded Moses. He was the son of Nun ; see Num. xiii. 9, 17. Deut. xxxix. 4. Both come from a word, signifying to save, Mat. i. 21. A faint figure, or shadow of the true Jesus. (a) Or heathens. (b) When the idolaters were expelled, the Ark was brought over Jordan, see Josh. iii. 17. iv. 11, 18. Then placed in Silo, Josh. xviii. 1. comp. Ex. xxiii. 27, &c. Till after David's reign, the Tabernacle had no fixed place, See Ex. xxxiv. 24 Num. xxi. 32. (c) Acceptance with him, as a king, preferable to Saul, Psal. lxxxix. 21, 22. (d) Comp. Isa. lviii. 3, 13 Hof. xii. 8. Psal. cxxxii. 5. (e) Whom he did worship, and derive great benefits from. (f) Consult 1 Kings vi. 1. 38. 1 Chron. xxii. 3. (g) On that part of Mount Zion, called Moriah, see 1 Chr. xxi. & xxii. Begun 480 years after the entering of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, 1 Kings vi. 1. viii. 1, &c. (h) See Gen. xiv. 18, 22. Psal. lvii. 3. xci. 1, 9. of incomparable power and

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>s</sup> See reflection b.



(i) glorious evangelical prophet, Heaven is my resplendent royal throne (k), and the whole earth is as my footstool from its comparative meanness: What house then will ye build by way of suitable habitation for me? saith the Lord; Or what is the place of my <sup>h</sup> supposed and only rest? Hath not my hand, and mine only (k), made all these things?

## SECT. XXXV. FROM VERSE LI.

*THEN, rising in boldness with their increasing visible signs of displeasure, Stephen thus went on: Oh, ye stiff-necked (a) enemies to the divine yoke, and ye (b) uncircumcised in heart and ears, who make a boast of glorying in*

glory, 1 Kings viii. 27. Mark iv. 58. (i) Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. (j) Comp. 1 Kings viii. 30, 39, 43, 49. Eccl. v. 1. Mat. v. 34, &c. Acts xvii. 24. (k) Who then can profit him? What trifles are the largest human works, compared with him? See 1 Chron. xxii. 14. xix. 2, &c.

(a) Taken from Ex. xxxii. 9. Deut. ix. 6, 13. Isa. xlviii. 4. (b) Wicked, licentious in your affections, Lev. xxvi. 41. Jer. iv. 4.

## REFLECTIONS.

\* The delight of God, is to rest in quiet hearts, and such as are always ready to obey. It is but reason, that shadows should yield unto truth, things carnal to things spiritual. The whole creation is a temple too narrow for God to be confined to. From St. Stephen's reasoning it appears, that, in various ages and circumstances God hath made various revelations, and appointed different positive institutions; that temporal afflictions are consistent with being in divine favour, and that a temporal Messiah was not to be expected; finally, that God, who had laid a plan for the successive dispensations, was now going to introduce the last and best of them, by erecting his spiritual kingdom under Jesus of Nazareth; and that to reject him, being a greater sin than that of their fathers, the Jews might reasonably expect, without speedy and sincere repentance, that the judgements of heaven would follow them to the uttermost. The Christian temple, is a pure body; his altar, an enlightened mind; and the virtues, his sacrifices.

*the flesh*<sup>a</sup>, ye do always resist *with violence* the (c) Holy Ghost, *in those whom he inspires*; as your fathers often did, *from the history now given*, so (d) do ye still continue obstinate. Which of all the most eminent prophets (e) have not your fathers furiously persecuted? and they have slain even them which shewed before of the joyful coming of Jesus, the (f) perfectly just One; of whom, *in place of honouring*, ye, who applied to Pilate and insisted for his crucifixion, have been now the actual cruel betrayers and murderers<sup>b</sup>: ye verily, who have received the law of God (g) in your forefathers, by the orderly disposition of angels (h) who had his authority, and (i) yet have not kept it as ye ought.

#### SECT. XXXVI. FROM VERSE LIV.

WHEN they of the council heard these very apposite, though severe things, they were (a) cut, as it were ajun-

(c) Alluding to Isa. lxiii. x. or Jer. vii. 24, &c. comp. Rom. xiii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 15. Ezek. xx. 5, &c. The leaders themselves were the chief in guilt; Jer. ii. 8. v. 31. viii. 12. Ezek. viii. 12. xxii. 25, &c. Hof. iv. 1. Mal. ii. 1, &c. The actions of God, and his providence. (d) See Ezek. xvi. 44. (e) Comp. 1 Kings xix. 10. Mat. v. 12. Luke xiii. 34. xxxvii. 16. Mat. xxi. 35. (f) See Isa. liii. 9, 11. Zech. ix. 9. Acts xiii. 14, 15. The Sanhedrim were obliged, by their constitution, to defend and guard the lives of the prophets with peculiar care, Acts iii. 13. (g) They made but one people, Mat. xxiii. 35. (h) Deut xxxiv. 2, comp. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2. (i) Thus was the crime in ch. vi. 13. fitly retorted. They made their boast of this law, Rom. ii. 17, &c.

(a) See ch. v. 33. Comp. Psal. xxxv. 16. Lam. ii. 16.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> God does not force men into the way of salvation, Psal. xcv. 7, 8. Heb. iii. 7, 8. No means whatever will reclaim some. The aids of heaven are suited to rational nature. <sup>b</sup> The Jews affected to cover their guilt, by zeal for the law of Moses. They are the true children of the covenant, whose hearts are cleansed from wicked desires; and whose ears do obediently hearken to the divine commands. We are the children of those whom we follow close. Plain and faithful reproofs are the kindest of any, though often ill received by prejudice and rage.

der, to the heart, and, like so many enraged wild beasts, they gnashed<sup>a</sup> on him with their teeth, from desire of tearing him immediately to pieces. But he, being more than ever full of the (b) gifts and joys of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly<sup>b</sup> into heaven where his sure everlasting recompences were, and saw, by an astonishing vision superadded to faith, the symbolical glory (c) of God Most High, as there displayed, and Jesus standing (d) like one ready to assist, on the right hand of God. And, to the honour of him whose servant he was, he said, in distinct hearing of his enraged envious enemies, Behold, at this very awful moment, I see the heavens (e) opened, and Jesus, the late humbled (f) Son of man, standing, with sovereign power on the right hand of God, even the Father<sup>c</sup>, to

(b) Of divine zeal. (c) So Is. vi. 1. Ez. i. 26, &c. Dan. vii. 9. comp. Luke ii. 9. Acts xxii. 11. Who can describe this? Where scripture is silent, none should attempt. (d) See Ex. xxiv. 17. Ezek. ii. 1. Psal. iii. 8. He might seem to hold out the bright celestial prize. Christ, at other times, is said to sit, in token of his royal majesty, Mark. xvi. 19. Acts ii. 34. Heb. i. 3. viii. 1. (e) See Mat. iii. 16. (f) Comp. Mat. viii. 20. xxvi. 64. He might shew himself in

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Charges of guilt which cannot be refused, are most apt to irritate the impenitent. <sup>b</sup> Here was an imported advice, to tremble and repent, because their judge lived. It is not expedient on account of man's malice to suppress God's glory. When erroneous men are vanquished with reasons, they burn with rage! They are as absent from the body, whom the Lord Jesus stands beside and has fellowship with; and by fixing their thoughts steadfastly upon his grace, they despise the torments of this world. *Martyrs of Smyrna*. Happy they who, with the eyes of their hearts, look up to the good things reserved for those who endured to the end; which, neither hath ear heard nor eye seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. *ibid*. They are no longer as mortal men, but become as angels. *ibid*. The divine power is present to lighten their pains, and to give strength to their resolution, who suffer for godliness' sake. By such steady patience, people thoroughly approve themselves sincere worshippers of God. *Martyrs in Palestine*. <sup>c</sup>The last extremities of the good, may ever expect extraordinary assistances, 2 Tim. i. 12. Strong popular clamour

*aid me.* Then, not able to contain themselves, they, on purpose to overpower this declaration and reference which they affected to deem blasphemous <sup>d</sup>, cried out together, with a loud voice, and stopped their ears in abhorrence (g), and hastily ran upon him with one accord, and by violent beating (h) cast him out of the city, and (i) then stoned him: and the chief<sup>e</sup> witnesses (j) who began stoning, laid down their upper clothes (k), for expedition's sake, at a young man's feet who (l) willingly undertook to care for them, and whose name was Saul. And thus they stoned (m) Stephen to death calling devoutly upon God for new measures of his grace, and, in firm faith of that power which was given to the great master he served, saying, with rapture, Lord Jesus, who art willing and able to save, receive my departing (n) spirit. And he kneeled down, under heavenly composure, and cried out with a loud and distinct voice, in imitation of his meek<sup>f</sup>

much the same form as when alive, to be the better known. (g) How unworthy of judges and senators! (h) Drave. The execution of criminals in the wilderness was to be without the camp; and, in imitation of that, when the Jews settled in Canaan, they used to execute their criminals without the city. (i) The legal punishment of blasphemy, Lev. xxiv. 14 and idolatry, Deut. xiii. 6, &c. At present an act of popular fury, so Acts xiv. 19. (j) See Deut. xvii. 7. Acts xxiii. 10, &c. Here was both the law of Moses and Romans violated. (k) Or cloaks. (l) Comp. Acts xxii. 20. Huge stones were sometimes thrown. (m) First martyr, and first crowned, as his name imports. Legal power they had not, John xviii. 31. (n) So Rev. xxii. 20, and imitating Christ himself, Luke

#### REFLECTIONS.

is a chief engine of sedition <sup>d</sup> Ignorant rage, pleads zeal very often (John xviii. 31), punishes without proof, and even against it (John xvi. ii. 3.), may be taught even in schools of religion; and is heightened by the multitude; see Phil. iii. 6. <sup>e</sup> See last reflections. <sup>f</sup> The faith and charity of forgiveness ought to be exercised under the greatest and most causeless provocations. Inward great affections raise the voice. Pilate dared not to call the Jews to an account for St. Stephen's murder; whence, providentially the Jews were not permitted to have such a plea against Christianity, as if it wanted support from

*and charitable leader on to bliss, Lord, God of all, lay not this other (o) aggravated sin (p) to their final charge. And when he had said this expiring earnest petition, he sweetly fell asleep (q) from suffering, to the enjoyment of the new and endless life.*

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## C H A P. VIII.

## SECT. XXXVII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND *the above-named (a) Saul was (b) consenting from the heart, unto his cruel death. And at (c) that time there was a great persecution begun against the<sup>a</sup> church of Christ (d) which was in use to meet at Jerusalem; and, owing to this severe malice, they were (e) most of them all scattered abroad throughout the neighbouring (f) regions of Judea and Samaria, except the brave<sup>b</sup> apostles, whose examples of faith and patience*

xxiii. 46. (o) This prayer was heard, and remarkably answered, in the conversion of Saul. (p) Alluding to the debiting of a person in an account; comp. Mat. v. 44. Luke xxiii. 34. John. xviii. 31. (q) So 1 Cor. xv. 18, 20, 51. 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. Whence Christian burial places, termed dormitories, comp. Jo. xi. 11.

(a) Chap. vii. 58. Like the king of that name, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, comp Gen xlix. 27. (b) See chap. xxvi. 9. Gal. i. 14. Having succeeded in the cutting off St. Stephen, they resolved upon nothing less than destroying the whole sect of Christians, comp. chap. xxii. 20. (c) Or day, verse 3. (d) The alleged blasphemies of one, were ascribed to the whole, see chap. vi. 13, 14. (e) See verse 3. Especially teachers and deacons. (f) Or

## REFLECTIONS.

the secular arm. Jesus, thou son of God, aid me! were also the last words uttered by Porphyrius. They who have much of forgiving pity, have largely imbibed the spirit of Christ, and may softly fall asleep.

<sup>a</sup> There may be good intending zeal, without knowledge, which, therefore, meets with compassion, and is kept within bounds; see note <sup>d</sup>. <sup>b</sup> Dangers, at times, must be neglected, and even despised for Christ's sake; though all prudent means of preservation may and ought to be used; see Acts ix. 32.

*were still requisite here for the public good. And certain devout (g) men, who were intimates from principle<sup>c</sup>, carried the dead body of Stephen to his burial-place, and, regardless of encompassing abuse, made great lamentation over him there. As for Saul, in his bitter ignorant zeal, he made the more havock of the church-members, that he had so late an example of this kind, entering into every suspected Christian house, or haunts of such disciples (h), and haling away both men and women<sup>d</sup>, committed them without mercy, as though taken in war, to close prison (i), for farther and severer punishment. Therefore, to make the best use possible of their flight from bloody minded men, they that were thus scattered abroad, went every where in their power (j) preaching<sup>e</sup> successfully the gospel word which leadeth to sure and everlasting life.*

districts. (g) See chap. ii. 5. (h) He trusted, even without commission to the authority of his seniors, see chap. xxvi. 10. 1 Tim. i. 13. (i) Comp. chap. iv. 3. v. 8. 19, 22, 25. What a contrast this, to his proportionate good zeal afterwards? (j) So Mat. xiii. 21, 23. Mark vi. 14. comp. Eph. vi. 10. Thus Christians overcame their enemies, not by yielding, but flying, Acts xi. 19, 20.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Gal. ii. 11. Now began the spiritual sceptre of Christ to extend itself. By means of ignorance, offence is lessened; though nothing can excuse murder. Of all others, none are so unpardonable as men of learning, and sacred office. Even malicious persecutors can go no greater length than they are permitted to do. Seeds of religion thus cast in many places, produce a plentiful harvest. <sup>c</sup> It is matter of just grief when the church is deprived of eminently faithful teachers and benefactors; yet if Christians shed tears, it is not for the sake of the dead, but for Christ's flock. <sup>d</sup> Add to note <sup>a</sup>, as follows: A particular church consisteth of such a number of persons only as is sufficient to answer the ends of church-fellowship, and who usually meet and worship together at the same time in one convenient place; comp. chap. xiii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 33. Acts ix. 31. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, &c. Rev. i. 11. It is fitly distinguished from civil societies, though not independent on them, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. John xviii. 36. <sup>e</sup> Even under persecution, the servants of Christ must not be idle. A regular human appointment, in certain cases, needs not be waited for. God over-

## SECT. XXXVIII. FROM VERSE V.

THEN Philip in particular, one of the seven deacons, and intimate companion of Stephen before his martyrdom, being full of the Spirit and relieved from his late care of the poor, went down to the (a) city of Samaria itself, and there (b) preached at large the doctrine (c) of Christ unto them who would<sup>a</sup> attend. And the people, almost with one accord, though held as heretics by the Jews, gave earnest heed unto those rational things which Philip spake, hearing him affectionately, and seeing with astonishment the manifold beneficent miracles which he did in support of celestial truth. For, they who had unclean spirits and were mad to an extreme degree, crying with loud voice, (d) as though greatly injured, came out of many that were understood to be possessed with them at his command: and many likewise taken with deplorable palsies, and that were lame from different diseases, were healed (e) by a single word or touch. And on account of both admirable gracious doctrine and marvellous confirming cures, there was great joy<sup>b</sup> of believing in that mixed city of Jews and heathens.

(a) Capital of that country, verse i. 8. See 1 King xvi. 24. (b) This was now allowable, though not before: see Mat. x. 5. They, like the Jews, expected a great prophet, from Deut. xviii. 15, and the name Messiah, they might have received from the Jews. Many of them had seen Christ, and believed on him before, see John iv. 5. 40, &c. (c) Comp Acts ii. 42. Eph. iv. 20. (d) Comp. Mat. viii. 29 Mark i. 2. 6. Luke iv. 41. (e) Even as did Christ and his apostles.

## REFLECTIONS.

rules cruelty and rage, to subserve his own wise and gracious purposes, Psal. lxxvi. 10. It gives power to doctrine among others, when people bravely suffer for it. Delightful mutual converse, may sometimes retard more useful work.

<sup>a</sup> By opposition, very often the power and glory of truth become the more conspicuous. Christ is able to triumph over the most Sataniſh errors and crimes. <sup>b</sup> The benign ſpirit of the goſpel lays the foundation for abating mutual prejudices, healing unhappy differences, and making real converts look

## SECT. XXXIX. FROM VERSE IX.

BUT there was *here* a certain man called Simon, which before *this time* in the same city used *what then was held to be magical* forcery, and, by *strange unaccountable appearances from known causes*, bewitched multitudes of the people of Samaria to credit *what he said*, giving out in their hearing, that himself was some great one, whom a deity had filled with eminent powers: to whom they of (a) all ranks gave rash and obedient heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is, of a truth, the great power of God (b) whom we ought to follow. And to him they had such wicked zealous regard, because, as has been observed, that of long time till now, he had bewitched them <sup>a</sup> with his unaccountable force-ries (c). But when, upon evidence so various and clear, they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the blessed state (d) and kingdom of God, and the powerful name (e) of Jesus Christ by which he did act, they were publicly baptized into that profession of their faith (f) both men and <sup>b</sup> women. Then Simon, the late forcerer, himself believed also (g) in part: and when he was baptized, to express his solemn and ingenuous attachment, he continued with Philip (h) as a disciple who chose to be further taught <sup>c</sup>, and wondered daily more and more,

(a) Comp. verse 26. Acts v. 36. (b) See Ex. viii. 19. (c) Or magic tricks. (d) Comp. Mark i. 14, 15. Luke ix. 2. Mat. iv. 17. Begun here, and completed hereafter. (e) See verse 35. (f) Comp. Mark xvi. 16. (g) See James ii. 19. His heart was not pure of mean secular views, though he might profess the contrary. (h) Comp. chap. i. 14. ii. 42, 46.

## REFLECTIONS.

upon one another as brethren in Christ Jesus, and equally acceptable to God, even the Father.

<sup>a</sup> See notes <sup>a</sup>, Sect. XXXVIII. <sup>b</sup> All Christians should submit to the same token of devotion to Christ, Eph. iv. 5. Mat. xxviii. 19. Gal. iii. 27. <sup>c</sup> There may be speculative faith where there is no true piety; and such it may be unavoidable to allow distinguishing gospel ordinances. Rigorous



beholding, *even to amazement*, the *numerous* miracles and signs of *omnipotent love* which were done by him.

### SECT. XL. FROM VERSE XIV.

NOW when the apostles, *as already said*, which were *still* (a) at Jerusalem heard that *the citizens of Samaria* had received *so generally and so affectionately from Philip*, the (b) word of God *which leadeth to eternal life*<sup>a</sup>; they sent unto them *from their number* (c) Peter and John, *by way of confirming ambassadors*: who, when they were come down *among them*, prayed for them *who were sincere in their belief and obedience* that they might receive (d) *rich supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost*. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them (e) *in visible and miraculous powers*; only they were baptized in the name of the (f) Lord Jesus, *as their master and governor*.) Then (g) laid they their hands on *as many as the Spirit did lead them to*, and they received, *in various suitable measures, the gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost*. And when Simon, *before spoken of*, saw (h), *from immediate and distinct operations*, that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was *instantly* given, he offered them *a considerable sum of mo-*

(a) See verse 1. (b) Comp. verse 12. (c) The pope of Rome, his pretended immediate successor, and head of the Catholic Church, would not thus submit to be sent by his Cardinals. Both were renowned for zeal, strength of mind, knowledge and other divine gifts. The apostles were the prime instruments of conveying the Holy Ghost upon earth, comp. Luke ix. 54. (d) See, for examples, Acts ii. 38. x. 44. &c. xix. 6. By this means the apostolical authority was admirably supported. (e) Comp. chap. x. 44. xi. 15. (f) See Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts ii. 38. (g) The manner of holy men, at that time, see Mat. xix. 13, 15. Supernatural effects now, from the same outward sign, have ceased. (h) See

### REFLECTIONS.

severity, from mistaken caution, would displease God more. A good life is the perfection of faith.

<sup>a</sup> We may and ought to receive implicitly what such autho-

ney, saying, Give me also this *authoritative power* (i), that on whomsoever I lay hands <sup>b</sup>, agreeable to your example, he may receive like immediate extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. But Peter with smart and just indignation said unto him, Thy money <sup>c</sup> abide and perish with thee, *unless thou speedily repent of thy guilt*, because thou hast indulged so base a thought as that the free gift of God may be thus purchased with money (j), to answer ends like thine of low secular avarice and ambition. Thou hast, after all thy late solemn professions, neither part nor lot at all in this spiritual (k) matter: for now it is clear to every one that thy heart is not right in the sight <sup>d</sup> of God, but vile, disingenuous, and wicked <sup>e</sup>. Repent, therefore, without a moment's delay, of this thy great (l) wickedness, and pray God under deep contrition of soul leading thee to a thorough change, if perhaps (m) the hideous thought of (n) thy heart and the punishment

Acts x. 46. xix. 6. (i) Hence simony, or purchasing things sacred with money. (j) Wicked hypocrite, see Mat. x. 8. (k) Or word, a Hebraism, like Luke i. 37. ii. 15. (l) Or malignity. (m) See Joel ii. 14. Jon. iii. 9. God might that instant have cut him off, or allowed to him some degree of grief without a thorough change. (n) The delusion which thou hast conceived, see Wisd. vi. 16. ix. 14.

#### REFLECTIONS.

rized teachers did declare. <sup>b</sup> Still heaven, according to some, is saleable; though disavowed by words. Superstition is much inclined to suppose devilish enchantments; and simple plain people are easily led by shew of boasters. Greater hurt is done to the church by corrupt members, than by those who do openly persecute. Such make use of religion for worldly gain, and subvert all sincerity. Baptismal dipping gives no benefit God-ward to those who are unclean before him. <sup>c</sup> Acts purposed in the mind are punishable. They are only fit to dispense the gifts of a most gentle divine spirit, who are of a pure sincere heart. To procure ecclesiastical benefices or ordinances, by bribery and corruption, is styled simony; nor can they who take such bribes be wholly clear of the crime. <sup>d</sup> Infamous proposals should be heard with horror. Clear unchristian conduct, proclaims the hypocrisy of solemn professions. <sup>e</sup> Even the worst of men ought not to be despaired of. It is some token for good, when sinners seem to fall under re-

*due to it* <sup>e</sup> may be forgiven thee. For I plainly perceive that thou art, *notwithstanding thy baptism, yet vicious all over* (o), *as in the gall of bitterness* (p), and in the close bond of ruinous iniquity, *by thy sad manner, and the holy infallible spirit that is in me.* Then answered Simon to that alarming language, and said, Pray ye who are holy men and dear to the Lord for (q) me a heinous miserable sinner indeed, that none of these most just and dreadful things which ye have spoken (r) from on high come upon me. And they whom the apostles sent, when they had testified to the converts of Samaria the obligation they were under to abide by the true Christian faith, profession, and practice, and preached, at full length, the same word of the Lord, returned to their brethren in Jerusalem, and, after like manner, preached the gospel in their way thither in many villages of the Samaritans.

#### SECT. XLI. FROM VERSE XXVI.

AND the <sup>a</sup> angel of the (a) Lord spake, *by commission given to him*, unto (b) Philip the evangelist, saying after this manner, Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto (c)

(o) Comp. 1 John v. 19. Deut. xviii. 18. (p) Or bitter gall, Hebraism, and may allude to Deut. xxix. 18. The Hebrew word for guilt and poison are the same; both unpleasant and destructive, see last note. (q) So Gen. xx 7, 17. Job. xlii. 8, &c. (r) What Peter spake, John approved of, verse 2c.

(a) See 1 Pet i, 22. (b) The same as in verse 2. (c) Ancient-

#### REFLECTIONS.

proof; and desire the prayers of others. <sup>e</sup> Too many are more afraid of God's punishment, than of their own evil doings. A resolute change cannot be effected without divine aid, and humble zealous human endeavours. The evidence of this is not naturally soon acquired, comp. verse 23. Dan. iv. 27. Joel ii. 14. To God the inmost soul is well known, comp. Wisd. i. 3, &c. Even after remission, lesser chastisements may be continued.

<sup>a</sup> Wonderful are the means by which Jesus brings about the in-

Gaza (*d*), which is next to desert, for further success in your pious labours. And he arose instantly <sup>b</sup>, and went under celestial direction; and, behold, a man of Ethiopia (*e*), an eunuch (*f*) of great authority under (*g*) Candace at that time reigning queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her (*h*) treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship the true God, in one of the most solemn Jewish (*i*) festivals, was now returning home from thence, and, sitting in his (*j*) chariot, with a companion, read Esaias (*k*) the prophet to be instructed by <sup>b</sup> him. Then the celestial Spirit (*l*) said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself as close as may be to the owner of this chariot (*m*) in thine eye. And Philip, eager to obey, ran thither to him with speed, and heard him distinctly read a part of what he well knew to be the prophet Esaias' book, and familiarly said, Understandest thou of what important matters thou at present <sup>c</sup> readest? And he, taking no offence, but the contrary, said with mild respect, How can I apprehend the import of such obscure prediction <sup>d</sup>, except some learned and good man should

ly one of the Philistine cities, 1 Sam. vi. 7. Jer. xxv. 20. Famous for Samson's deeds and death, Judges xvi. 1, &c. (*d*) Or in ruins, from the time of Alexander the Great, and where no remarkable person was to be looked for. Almost a wilderness, *Strabo*. (*e*) The same with the Hebrew Chius, from Cham; now Abyssinia; an obscure kingdom. (*f*) Fulfilment of Isa. lvi. 4. 5. Such were kept to prevent suspicions. (*g*) Common name given to all their queens, *Plin.* l. 6. c. 29. Like the Pharaohs, and afterwards Ptolemies of Egypt. *Strabo*. (*h*) Among the chief offices. (*i*) The passover, or pentecost. Mark of great piety, in a proselyte. (*j*) After the manner of the great, Isa. xxii. 18. (*k*) A farther mark of excellent character, see Deut. xvii. 18, &c. Josh. i. 8. (*l*) See verse 20. Or some strong divine impulse, which could easily be distinguished. (*m*) Comp. Ruth ii. 8.

#### REFLECTIONS.

struction and conversion of upright souls. <sup>b</sup> The Lord ever encourages those who already have, and wish yet more to improve. As little time as possible should be left vacant from valuable use, especially where secular business occupies much. Reading aloud at times is the way to be more deeply impressed. <sup>c</sup> To read without understanding is of very little service. <sup>d</sup> Prophecies are more difficult to be understood, than any other

*take in hand to guide me? And, with modest affection, he desired Philip, if he had it in his power thus to (n) serve him spiritually, that he would come up \* where he was, and sit with him for a little. The place of scripture which he read as Philip came to him was this (o), He was led, without any resistance or the least mark of disinclination, even as a harmless sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb mildly dumb before his (p) shearers, so opened he not his mouth. In the depth of his humiliation (q) his judgement, by an unrighteous sentence, was quite taken away; and who shall be left of those who follow him to declare (r) his generation? for his pure, innocent, and useful life (s) is taken away from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, if possible, tell without delay, of whom speaketh the*

(n) Pleasant instance of humanity, modesty, and love of truth, comp. 1st. lxi. 20. (o) 1st. liii. 7. 8. Perhaps the eunuch had lately been brought over to the Jewish religion; and so was not much acquainted with the national expectation of the Messiah, and much less with their prophecies. (p) 1st. Pet. ii. 22. Some, his spoiler; that is, the wolf. (q) He was condemned against all law and justice, See Job xxvii. 2. (r) His disciples, for that sad space, forsook him. Sometimes for an age. Others, who shall declare the wickedness of that generation? for they took away his life who was the perfection of innocence, comp. 1st. xxxiv. 10, 17. Heb. vii. 24 (s) Or, on account of the evils which he endured; he was honoured with the

#### REFLECTIONS.

parts of scripture, 2 Pet. i. 20. The event best explains them. Therefore, during that space, they cannot be absolutely necessary to salvation; in which last things, a careful diligent mind is sure to succeed. Let the skilful be consulted, and yet only depended upon so far as they are able to convince. Good men are seldom without occasion to be good. Good zeal and endeavours after scripture truth, meet with heavenly aids, Hos. vi. 3. Phil. ii. 16. Likewise love of religious converse. Desire to learn, and desire to teach, meet well together. God sets all in rule and order, without human perception. Happy they who in different scenes and stations of life, have it at heart to glorify Christ. \* It is much in any, in a great person more especially, to own ignorance, to answer mildly, and to invite to converse. † The providence of God is to be adored,

*holy prophet of the highest* this (t)? Of himself, *thinkest thou?* or of some other yet greater man to come after him? Then Philip opened his (u) mouth, and, in *solemn manner* began at the same *eminent passage* of scripture, and preached unto him *largely the blessed Jesus, and his divine doctrine, so suitable to what had been thus foretold.* And, as they went on their way, *giving and receiving delight from the most interesting of all subjects,* they came in time unto a certain *running water*: and the eunuch *under clear and strong faith,* said, See, here is an *abundance of cleansing water*; what doth hinder me then, *having had so good an instructor, and so much increase of precious knowledge,* to be *instantly baptized, by way of visibly professing the true religion of that divine person* (x)? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart *the grand doctrinal articles* (y) *and precepts we have been discoursing of,* thou certainly mayest. And he answered and said (z), I believe *sincerely and affectionately* that Jesus Christ is the Son *and heir, above every other,* of the *one living and true God, and submit myself to his celestial discipline*®. And he, *the chamberlain,* commanded the

highest rewards. (t) Isaiah, was a great sufferer; but much greater was Jesus Christ. (u) See Mat. v 2. (x) Many things therefore Philip had spoken to, which are not rehearsed. (y) Comp. Mat. xxviii. 20. Acts ii. 38. Rom. i. 9, 10. (z) Comp. Acts viii.

#### REFLECTIONS.

in giving fair opportunities for religious instruction. § How happy for Christians, had they rested in this primitive simple confession. Their innocence departed with their corruption of such divine simplicity. Every new council formed a new formula, which gave rise to contentions and falsehood. All who confess Jesus to be the Son of God, ought to be held as brethren. To preach the word is more than to administer the baptismal ceremony, John iv. 2. 1 Cor i. 17. A cheerful courage with readiness, are fit for one who would allure any to the gospel. Ambiguous scripture expressions, should be left as we find them. It is pleasant, with a becoming humility, both to offer and receive spiritual assistance. The true sense of ancient prophecies, will not fail to point out Christ. The greatest should not think themselves above submitting to the dis-

*driver of the chariot to make it stand still : and they went down both into the water (a), both Philip the teacher and the eunuch who had been taught ; and he (c) baptized him there into the name of Jesus whom he had so freely owned. And, when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away (c) Philip to some other place, and without allowing much more converse, that the eunuch saw him no more afterwards : and he went on his way rejoicing, to have had the true road to eternal life, and by so unexpected and singular a providence perfectly (d) laid open unto him. But Philip was next found at (e) Azotus<sup>h</sup> ; and, passing on through the country where this lies, he successfully preached in all the other cities, like Joppa, Lydda, and Saron, till he came to Cesarea (f) on the Mediterranean coast.*

## C H A P. IX.

## SECT. XLII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND Saul (a), *even as before, like a ravening wolf,* yet breathing out *bitter threatenings and bloody*

39 Probably by immersion. (a) As visible sign of forgiveness, and obligation to live righteously, Comp. Acts xvi. 31. 1 John v. 15. John i. 46, 50. Psal. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 33. Deacons had such power from apostles. (b) Perhaps like as in 1 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Kings ii. 16. : and that to increase his faith. The Eunuch then sought, and probably did receive spiritual gifts. (c) Comp. Mat. xiii. 44. He carried the glad tidings to Abyssinia : where it is now mixed with much error and Jewish ceremony. (d) Or Ashdod. One of the five cities of the Philistines, verse 46. Josh. xiii. 3. (e) Different from Cesarea Philippi, Matth. xvi. 13. Called formerly the tower of Straton ; enlarged and adorned by Herod the great, in honour of Augustus Cesar. See Joseph. Bel. Jud. l. i. c. 16. About 40 miles from Jerusalem, comp. Acts xxi. 8, 9. A farther example of preaching the gospel to others than natural Jews ; though not as yet to Heathens.

(a) Comp. chap. viii. 1. The Jews had gained one point, in

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

tinguishing solemnities of the gospel ; and a credible profession is all that ministers of the gospel ought to require. <sup>h</sup> See last note of<sup>d</sup>.

slaughter against the disciples of the (b) Lord Jesus, *on account of their doctrine*<sup>2</sup>, went in person unto the high priest, and desired of him *and the other elders*, letters of (c) power to (d) Damascus to the synagogues of that city, that if he found any there of this (e) way in belief and avowed profession, whether they were men (f) or women, he might bring them bound as prisoners unto the supreme Jewish court at Jerusalem (g), for receiving sentence and for public execution. And as he journeyed thither, he came near to Damascus, where he hoped to satiate his own and the revenge of his constituents more than ever; and suddenly there shined round about him a splendour of light (b) surpassing even that of the sun from heaven. And, owing to surprise with the manner of its approach towards him, he fell prostrate (i) to the earth; and, in that same awful moment, heard a loud and distinct voice, saying unto him in the Hebrew

obliging Pilate to condemn Jesus against his own judgement, and would not condescend to ask him for leave to persecute. He winks at their riots and irregular proceedings. Yet, at length, was deposed and made away with himself, at Vienna of Gaul. (b) See chap. ii. 36. The greater his fury, the more wonderful did the power of Jesus appear in his conversion. (c) Comp. Acts xxii. 5. xxvi. 12. They must have had great influence over the synagogues abroad. (d) An ancient and powerful city of Syria, at a great distance from Jerusalem; and which has its name from blood, as being supposed the place where Cain fled that of Abel, see Joseph. Ant. l. i. c. 7. Bel. Jud. l. ii. c. 25. Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33. Many thousand Jews lived here. (e) Metaphorical, as in chap. xix. 9, 22. For sect, or religion. (f) Comp. viii. 3. (g) See John xvi. 2. (h) Comp. chap. xxii. 6. xxvi. 13. A beautiful contrast to his spiritual blindness from bitter zeal, see chap. xii. 7. (i) Comp. Dan. viii. 17. x. 9. (j) Comp. Matth. xxv. 40. 45. Luke x. 16. Christ and his people are one. A Nazarene. Messiah might often before

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>2</sup> The imagination is deeply affected by what we have recently seen, and been taught. Cruel edicts are the triumphs of barbarians. *LaTantius*. Even eminent persons do not easily disentangle themselves from prejudices and politic attachment to national rules. How few prefer the profession of hazardous truth, to the acquiescing in errors safe and lucrative? *Lord Hailes*. The rage of enemies is increased by the success of



*language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest<sup>b</sup> thou me (j)? And he said as he could from astonishment and perturbation, Who art thou, Lord, whom I so undesignedly misuse? And the Lord said, I am (k) Jesus of Nazareth whom thou thus violently persecutest in those beloved people who adhere to my doctrine; be convinced, therefore, both for thine own sake and theirs, that it is hard obstinacy, and will prove destructive for thee should thou continue to kick against the (l) pricks of resistance which stand<sup>c</sup> close in thy way. And he, trembling to a great degree for bypast cruelties, and quite astonished with present pitying condescension, said, O Lord, what wilt thou have<sup>d</sup> me then hereafter to do, in proof of my sincere and grateful obedience? And the Lord Jesus said unto him, Arise, without delay, and go into the city Damascus, just at hand, and it shall be there told thee from me*

this, have been the subject of his derision. (k) See chap. viii. 55, 56. (l) Or goads. A similitude from oxen, or other cattle in yoke, being so pricked forward, and kicking back to their own greater hurt. A proverb even among good heathen writers, both Greek and Ro-

#### REFLECTIONS.

their persecuted brethren. <sup>b</sup> The faithful are the body of Christ, and his members. Charms of splendid ritual religion, can darken the clearest understandings, and corrupt the best natures. Some make their boast of being cruel to heretics. Error from ignorance and no malice, is pitiable. People of high fierce minds must be pulled down, in order to instruct them. To contend against superior power, is to bring certain ruin and destruction upon people's selves. Young people do often imbibe prejudices against the gospel, from hasty and supercilious opinions of their seniors, and even teachers. <sup>c</sup> Impotent rage hurts one's self. <sup>d</sup> Fierceness subdued, inclines to zealous obedience. God and the Lord Jesus love such services. We should be desirous of repairing the mischief we have occasioned. Persecution may make hypocrites, but no real converts. The growth of irreligion is one certain consequence of a persecuting system! Saul once the chief of sinners, is now revered as the greatest of the apostles; and loved as the dearest of saints. Adorable sovereign grace! Isa. lv. 8. Every convicted sinner should thus desire of Jesus to write his own terms; and employ all their after powers for his service, Psal.

what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him *for aiding his cruel designs*, stood *for a while* (m) speechless *like so many dead statues*, hearing a tremendous voice (n), but seeing no man, *even where the light and sound did seem to come from*. And Saul, agreeable to divine command (o), arose by assistance from the earth: and when *the lids of his eyes were opened*, he saw (p) *even then no man of those who stood near him*; but they *who had been witnesses of the above transaction*, led him, *somewhat after the manner of a bound prisoner*, by the hand, and brought him *through the suburbs and streets* into the (q) city Damascus. And he was at his lodgings *there for three full days without sight, and all that time, from deep humiliation* (r) neither did<sup>e</sup> regularly eat nor drink.

#### SECT. XLIII. FROM VERSE X.

AND *now the light of gladness awaits him*: for there was a certain eminent disciple (a) of Christ at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord Jesus in a (b) vision, Ananias. And he said, *in return*<sup>a</sup>, Behold,

man. (m) Comp. chap. xxvi. 14. Gen. xix. 7. John. xii. 29. Dan. x. 7. For a time this might be, though they did afterwards, like Saul, sink down. (n) This to them was not articulate; chap. xxii. 9. John xii. 28. (o) See Dan. viii. 18. (p) Being overpowered with heavenly light, verse 9, 12, 17, 18. xxii. 11. Thus blind of understanding had he been, in midst of the marvellous light of the gospel. His thoughts would be turned the more inward, that he could not see. (q) By such means, the miraculous history could not fail to be known.

(a) Said by Eusebion to be one of the seventy; by Augustin, a Presbyter; and by Dorotheus, after this bishops of Damascus, Comp. Dan. i. 6. &c. (b) Or extasy. He might appear to him as an angel; or in that form by which he had before known him.

#### REFLECTIONS.

cxxvi. 5. <sup>e</sup> Deep repentance, with suitable prayers, inclines to fasting, at least in part.

<sup>a</sup> A true Christian heart is ever prompt to hear and obey.

I am here, Lord, *ready to (c) obey whatever you command*, And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go, *without delay*, unto the street which is called *(d) Straight*, and inquire in the house of Judas *(e) who lives there*, for one called Saul of *(f) Tarsus*, *from that city of his birth*: for <sup>b</sup>, behold, he *now prayeth (g) under deep concern on account of what he has been, and earnestly wishes to be directed in*; and he also hath seen in a vision supernatural, like this present one of yours, a man named to him Ananias, coming in *as of his own accord*, and, with great tenderness, putting his hand on him, that he might *thereby (h) receive his sight*. Then Ananias, *being ignorant of the appearance to Saul while he journeyed*, answered, like an astonished person who would excuse himself, Lord, I have heard by many unexceptionable testimonies of this same man, how much severe evil he hath done, both immediately and from his instigation of others, to thy best *(i) saints (j) at Jerusalem*: and here too, I am credibly informed, he hath obtained authority by request from the chief Jewish priests, to bind all up to be tried as infamous malefactors that call with firm faith on thy *(k) most blessed name (l)*. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, *without the smallest apprehension of any such mischief again*: for he is now become a chosen *(m) vessel unto me*,

(c) See Matth. xxi. 30. (d) Being more so probably, than most of the rest, see Isa. xlv. 3. (e) Or Judah. Probably an intimate. (f) A city of Cilicia, see chap. xxi. 39 xxii. 3. (g) Or spendeth his time in praying, see verse 9. (h) See chap. viii. 17. (i) Christians separated by faith and holy profession, from the large body of unbelievers, see verse 32, 41. (j) The capital of Judea. (k) So 1 Cor. i. 2. Rom. x. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 22. They sung a hymn to Christ, as a God. Pliny. (l) Put for himself, chap. vii. 58. (m) A vessel of election, Hebraism, like Luke xvi. 9. Or useful instrument,

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> Grace and liberal comfort come of prayer. Nothing is done out of order, that is done at Christ Jesus' command. How admirable his condescension and care! Brotherly affection is ready to embrace the greatest sinners, when they are brought to Christ. They should love much, who have had much forgiven, Luke vii. 48. and be active in service. <sup>c</sup> Jesus Christ,

to bear *with success* the knowledge of my name, even as any other select messenger, before the (n) idolatrous Gentiles, and before (o) kings themselves, of highest dignity, and the present persecuting children of Israel: for I will shew him at large, both by word and his own (p) experience of what he hath made others go through, how great things he must henceforth cheerfully suffer by cruel hatred, imprisonments, stripes, dangers, and death for my name's sake and the propagation of divine truth among men. And Ananias, now fully satisfied, went his way, and entered with pleasure into the house of Judas, where Saul was; and, putting his (q) hands on him with tender and sought permission, said, my dear Christian brother (r) Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest hither, hath sent (s) me upon this truly gracious design, that thou mightest receive thy sight as formerly, and be, now and in all time coming, filled with miraculous powers of (t) the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes (u) as it had been scales of certain coagulated humours; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was <sup>d</sup> publicly baptized to evidence his conversion, and no less certainly the remission of bypast sins. And when he had received meat, after so long fasting, he was most sensibly strengthened.

2 Tim. ii. 21. (n) Comp. Isa. xlix. 6. (o) See chapters xxiv. xxv. xxvi. (p) Comp. Psal. lx. 5. lxxi. 10. (q) See Mark xvi. 18. Acts xxii. 13, 14. (r) See chap. vi. 3. (s) Comp. chap. vii. 56. 1 Cor. xv. 8. (t) See chap. viii. 15, 17. How could those things have happened, unless Jesus had been alive; and in a glorious state of exaltation? Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 18. Gal. i. 17. Acts xxvi. 19. (u) A most lively emblem of the veils being done away from his heart, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 16.

#### REFLECTIONS.

therefore, who is exalted in his kingdom to all power in heaven and on earth, may be religiously invoked, see Acts vii. 59. <sup>d</sup> He pities next to involuntary ignorance, and strong prejudice from it. How great an argument against unbelieving Jews, is this conversion of Paul's? Phil. iii. 4, &c. 1 Cor. iv. 11, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 27. &c. Acts xx. 19, 12. xix. 12.

## SECT. XLIV. FROM MIDDLE OF VERSE XIX.

THEN was Saul in conversation and worship certain days with the disciples of Jesus which were (a) at Damascus. And straightway he preached with freedom and zeal what was revealed to him by Christ, in the Jewish synagogues of that city, firmly proving<sup>a</sup> by miracles, and the whole tenour of the prophetic writings, that he whom they had so lately and basely crucified is for certain the royal (b) Son of God—the great and looked for Messiah. But all that heard him in those sacred places were amazed, and said one to another, Is not this he, on whom so great and sudden a change is made, that, but some few days before, destroyed, to the utmost extent of his authority, them which, professing Christian belief, called on this name of Jesus at each of their wonderful healing operations in the city of Jerusalem; and likewise came hither (c) for that avowed intent that he might bring them bound for judgement and execution, to the chief priests who have their most usual residence there? But Saul, the more he was taken notice of and opposed, increased so much the more in strength of zeal under divine influences, and confounded the (d) Jews by his various solid and irresistible arguments upon the side of pure gospel faith, proving that this Jesus of Naza-

(a) Comp. Acts i. 15. viii. 1, 3. Afterwards he turned into Arabia, Gal. i. 17. He knew too much of the Jewish zeal, to declare unto them as yet his own conversion. (b) Comp. Psal. ii. 7. Acts viii. 37. Various particulars may be supplied to this narrative from chapters xxii. and xxvi. Gal. i. 2 Cor. xi. 32. The power of the Jews in Damascus, was not so great as it had been. *Jos. ph.* l. 18. c. 7. They had at this time the first offer. (c) See verse ii. 14. chap. viii. 37. (d) Comp. chap. vi. 10. 1 Cor. ii. 16. Rom.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Enemies to truth are best vanquished with their own weapons. Our Lord's usual method, is, to let light into men's minds as they are able to bear it. Even when a sinner is forgiven, he can hardly forgive himself; and wishes fervently to testify his love, by the greatest study and diligence to convert others.

*reth is very (e) Christ, and that it was in vain for them to look for another.*

# SECT. XLV. FROM VERSE XXIII.

AND, after that many (a) days were fulfilled, the Jews, finding it impossible to answer his arguments, took counsel (b) among themselves how to<sup>a</sup> kill him by conspiracy. But their laying await for this purpose, was made known of Saul, by undoubted evidence; and that they watched all the gates of the city day and night, by some sudden stroke to kill him. Then the disciples of Christ, to whom he had imparted his information, being anxious to preserve so valuable a life, took him by night<sup>b</sup>, and let him down, with the utmost secrecy, by the side wall (c) in a basket. And when Saul was (d) come from thence to Jerusalem the capital, he assayed to join himself familiarly to certain of the disciples: but, from remembrance of his early and bitter persecutions, they were all afraid of conversing close with him, and believed not for some time that he, so signalized for rage against the church, was a (e) real disciple. But Barnabas (f) at

iv. 20. (e) The same as son of God, verse 20. see Matth. xvi. 16. Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20.

(a) Or much time, Hebraism, like Gen. v. 5, 8, 11. Acts vi. 3. Supposed to comprehend three years from the conversion of Saul, after his return from Arabia, see Gal. i. 17, 18. (b) How soon was verse 16. fulfilled? (c) Possibly Paul was let down by the window of a house built on the city wall, 2 Cor. ii. 32. Josh. ii. 15. (d) Comp. chap. x. 28. John iv. 9 (e) They were taught to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, Mat. vii. 15. Aretas's possessing Damascus then, free intercourse with Jerusalem was much obstructed, see 2 Cor. xi. 31, 32. They might suspect him still, after all that they had heard, to be a feigned convert. (f) See chap. iv. 36, 37. They might before this, have been known to

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> When arguments cannot be answered, the enemies of truth seldom fail to use violence. Here is full proof, that not a hair of the head can fall to the ground without divine permission. Paul had yet many things to do and to suffer. <sup>b</sup> It is lawful, by every fair mean, to avoid persecution, Mat. x. 23.

length took him (g) as by the hand, with an endeared friendship, and <sup>c</sup> brought him to the other apostles to be acknowledged by them likewise, and declared at full length (h) how he, whom they were now to receive, had seen the Lord Jesus in the way to Damascus, and that he had spoken to him with immediate mild, yet powerful efficacy; and how, ever since, he, the late violent persecutor, had preached boldly and openly at Damascus and elsewhere <sup>d</sup> in the name of the Lord Jesus, their common gracious master. And he was with them, from that time forward, coming in with freedom to the apostles, and going out, after like easy manner (i), while he and they abode together at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly every where in the name, and as an ambassador of the exalted Lord Jesus, and disputed with zeal, not only against native Hebrews, but against the late profelyted Grecians (j) to their religion: but they, in great numbers, even as the people of Damascus, waving answers of reason to his strong arguments, went about to slay him either by violence or subtilty. Which when the Christian brethren knew of, upon proper evidence, they brought him down without delay to Cesarea-Philippi (k), by the most prudent measures they could contrive, and from that sent him forth properly recommended to (l) Tarsus, at no great distance, where he was born, and might still have numbers of his relations and acquaint-

each other. (g) So Luke ix. 47. xiv. 4. Heb. viii. 9. (h) Comp. John vii. 13, 26. xi. 54. (i) Comp. Acts i. 21. Gal. i. 18, 19. How Barnabas was informed of these particulars, is neither certain nor material. Paul he knew acted as one having commission. (j) See chap. vi. 9. He scarce sooner began to preach the gospel, then he was made a candidate for the cross. (k) Not that in chap. viii. 10 Comp. Acts ix. 11. xxi. 39. (l) Once the capital of Cilicia, in the Lesser Asia; on the side of the Levant Sea, near the mouth of the river Cydnus; the place of St. Paul's birth,

#### REFLECTIONS.

John vii. 1. viii. 15. The less one cares for themselves, in a way of duty, the more they are worthy to be saved. <sup>c</sup> Tender faithful friendship is best established upon similar pious principles. <sup>d</sup> The reproachful name of an apostle, is peculiarly try-

*tances alive*°. Then had the ' *several churches of Jesus* rest (m) *from violent persecution* throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified to *strong faith and virtue* ; and walking in the *true filial fear* of the Lord, and in the comfort of *hope*, by the *gifts and graces* of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied (n) *to a great degree*.

## SECT. XLVI. FROM VERSE XXXII.

AND it came to pass, *at this favourable juncture*, as Peter passed throughout all *these quarters*<sup>a</sup>, *to teach, admonish, and confirm true believers*, he came down also to the (a) *faints of that same order* which dwelt at (b) Lydda. And there he found a certain man named

and in which he had familiars and relations. (n) Or congregations ; making in whole, but one church. Tertullian and Eusebe say, that this was owing to Tiberius Cesar, hearing of miracles done by Christ. Or it might rather be owing to Caligula's order, to have his statue set up and worshipped in the temple. (n) So in chap. ii. 11.

(a) See verse 13. (b) Numbered among the cities in connection with Judea ; and not far from the coast of the Mediterranean

## REFLECTIONS.

ing. ° One additional proof of the gospel, is that of its converting great sinners. † They who are concerned for Christ's glory, should trust to his authority and power. The faithful have some days of joyous ease given them, by way of respite, Psal. ci. 1. Much comfort flows from mutual unity and concord. Sedition and civil war do often turn the course of barbarity from off innocent persecuted people. *Dion. bishop of Alex.* A church arising from oppression, is frequently built with more glory than before. *Lactantius.* Says the same fine author; During the time in which the Church suffered no violent assaults from her enemies, she extended her hands unto the east, and unto the west ; infomuch that now there was not any the most remote corner of the earth to which the divine religion had not penetrated, and thereby became mild and gentle. Rest should be enjoyed with much godly edifying fear.

<sup>a</sup> Such is the duty of a true pastor. How blessed are they who, like Jesus, go about continually doing good, Acts x. 38.



(c) Eneas, which had been kept close shut up in his bed eight years, and all that time was sick and disabled of the palsy (d) to a desperate incurable degree. And Peter said unto him, by a divine impulse (e), Eneas, Jesus Christ<sup>b</sup>, that glorious prince Messiah whom the Jews did crucify, by his mighty reigning power, maketh thee whole at this very instant; arise, without delay (f), under this belief, and make thy own bed, in proof of your entire recovery. And, upon that single word of his, he arose immediately. And most part of all that dwelt in celebrated Lydda, and Saron in the neighbourhood, saw him afterwards, and knowing him to have been thus wonderfully healed, (h) turned themselves with true faith to serve the Lord.

### SECT. XLVII. FROM VERSE XXXVI.

NOW there was for the present at (a) Joppa, a certain female disciple of Christ, named (b) Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is called Dorcas: this woman's life was full of all sorts of good works, and particularly alms-deeds which she did (c) greatly delight in. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick<sup>a</sup> to an extreme degree, and then died: whom when they had washed, agreeable to the manner of this age and place, in order to burial (d), they laid her corps (e), for some while,

sea. (c) Greek, signifying laudable. (d) See Mat. ix. 2. (e) Taking no glory to himself, comp. chap. iii. 6, 12. (f) Being at home, he needed not to carry it, as in Matth. ix. 6. (g) Some Assaron, a country bordering upon the Mediterranean sea; comp. 1 Chron. v. 16. Isa. xxxiii. 9. (h) See chap. iii. 19.

(a) Some read Japha, a celebrated city on the Mediterranean sea. Jonah i. 3. Now Jaffa, 30 miles N. W. of Jerusalem. (b) A Syriac name; explained in Greek by Dorcas, signifying roe, or fawn. In Latin, by Caprea a wild goat. (c) See verse 39. comp. Isa. i. xxi. Acts xiii. 10. (d) Performed by near friends. (e) Cer-

### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> A sure argument of Christ's divine exaltation. Pious humility transfers all to heaven. <sup>c</sup> By charitable acts, health of souls is promoted.

<sup>a</sup> The very best are liable to trouble and death. The course of nature is not stopped, on their account; yea, God so orders

in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to (f) Joppa, and the *Christian* disciples who lived in it had heard that Peter was there *teaching divine truth and confirming the same by miracles*, they sent unto him two men of *special credit*, desiring him that he would not (g) by any means delay to come to them for *advice and assistance*<sup>b</sup>. Then Peter arose, *so soon as the messengers came*, and went with them *in haste to where the deceased lay*. When he was come to Joppa, they brought him into the upper chamber of *Tabitha's house*, where he might look upon the (h) dear remains of so amiable and useful a person: and all the poor lone widows whom she had been accustomed to serve, stood by him weeping (i) out the severe and genuine sorrows of their present loss, and shewing some specimens of the coats and garments which Dorcas made<sup>c</sup> only for giving away to proper objects (j), while she was continued in life with them. But Peter by *intreaty*<sup>d</sup> put them all forth of the (k) chamber, that he might pour out the unfeigned fervours of his heart with so much the more freedom, and kneeled down and prayed for leave and ability to restore departed life; and, turning

tain signs all of her death. (f) Only a few miles distant. (g) Or he grieved, Greek (h) They seem to have inclined, that he would raise her from the dead, though they had not confidence to ask such a thing. (i) Comp. Mark v. 38. (j) See verse 36. (k) As

#### REFLECTIONS.

it. <sup>b</sup> The loss of dear and useful friends is peculiarly pitiable.

<sup>c</sup> An urgent petitioner does what he can, to work up even the known charitable in their favourite good works. Moving objects lead to compassion. By signs of grief, desire is strongly expressed. <sup>d</sup> Loud lamentation is a hindrance to prayer. A weak female spirit, is not fit to witness the rising of one from the dead. By faith and prayer, the virtue of the spirit is increased. An ornament to religion, cannot well be spared in its tender infant state. The bias of the human mind to benefactors, is very strong. There are circumstances in which money is of far less use to the poor, than necessities and conveniences for immediate supply. By passing through kind hands, charity is more than doubled. The memory of good actions survives to the credit of character, profession, and glory of God. No

him, in the firm faith that this would happen, to the dead body, said unto it, by the authoritative name of his great Lord, as though living already, Tabitha, arise from thence to complete power for thy favourite beneficent works again. And she opened her eyes : and, when she saw Peter, she sat up. And, in the same moment, he gave her his hand, and lifted her up to her seat ; and when he had called back the saints and widows who had left the room at his desire (1), he presented her quite alive and found in her health as ever. And, being a miracle of so extraordinary a kind, it was quickly known throughout all Joppa ; and many, more than even before, believed in the exalted name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it came to pass that he, the great instrument of such divine miraculous operation, tarried<sup>e</sup> many days after in Joppa, where he had reason from the good seed sown, to look for a rich harvest of souls, and his dwelling was with one Simon a tanner.

## C H A P. X.

## SECT. XLVIII. FROM VERSE I.

**W**HILE Peter abode here, there was a certain man in the neighbouring celebrated city of (a)

in 1 Kings xvii. 19, 20. comp. Matth ix. 25. Mark v. 40. (1) How great must their joy have been ! Till then, no doubt, the celestial benevolent spirit had been kept back from its own place.

(a) See chap. viii. 40. The first fruits from among the Gentiles. Now called to a spiritual warfare, comp. Isa. ii. 4, 11. Mat.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

seed of vain glory doth mix with gracious acts of faith. <sup>e</sup> Pious friends given back to their relations, is just cause of rejoicing. They who are thus restored, only to become more useful, do thereby add to their eternal weight of glory. Where should preachers abide with so much content, as among those who are willing to receive benefit !

Cesarea called (*b*) Cornelius, a (*c*) centurion of the (*d*) soldiery band called the Italian (*e*) band, a devout man, who had separated himself from idolaters to pure worship; and one that, according to his right belief, feared God sincerely, and all his (*f*) house <sup>a</sup> with him; which, in place of too prevailing (*g*) rapaciousness at that time, <sup>b</sup> gave, out of pure benevolence, much seasonable alms to the needy (*h*) people of all denominations, and, consistently with his other duties, prayed to God (*i*) always: he saw in a vision when awake, and evidently (*j*), as with his bodily eyes, about the (*k*) ninth hour of the day, an angel of

xxviii. 19. In a time of extensive tranquillity, it was meet to go forth among the Gentiles and preach. (*b*) A Roman one, and famous, like Cornelius, Scipio, Lentulus, Sylla. (*c*) Or commander of an hundred, see Mat. viii. 5. (*d*) Or legion, containing many cohorts. Some had their name from numbers; and others from their place, see chap. xxvii. 1. xxi. 31. (*e*) Either from Italica of Spain, or Silius Italicus; or from the soldiers being mostly, if not all, of Italy. (*f*) Or family. His qualities were truly wonderful, from being a Heathen, and bred up to arms; comp. chap. xvii. 4. Luke vii. 5. (*g*) See Luke iii. 14. (*h*) He might indeed, and probably did prefer Jews, by whom he had profited much, comp. Acts xxi. 39, 40. xxvi. 17, 23. (*i*) Often, regularly, both in public and private. (*j*) See verse 30. Luke i. 11. (*k*) Three afternoon, an hour for Jewish public prayer, see chap. iii. 1. To him who used what he had, was given more.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Good and near examples have great influence. A right knowledge of God, leads to faith in Christ, John vi. 44, 45. comp. 2 Tim. iii. 8. John viii. 47. True religion has proved always subservient to the most valuable purposes. It is commonly seen that those of a family do frame themselves upon the master of it. The liberal and devout are well prepared for believing Christ's religion. What is bestowed upon the poor, the Lord accounts as done to himself. Sacred exercises ought to be our daily business and pleasure. Not only virtue, but piety maintained in a tempting life, is most amiable and exemplary. Prayers with alms, add beauty and acceptance to each other. Domestic religion in an evil day, requires a good degree of heroism, Josh. xxiv. 15. <sup>b</sup> Where devotion operates, justice with generous human love, the character is complete. Works agreeable to right reason, and from a sincere mind, are accepted by God. Cornelius understood religion to consist in

God coming in to him *who had been a heathen*, and saying unto him, *by name*, Cornelius. And when he looked *earnestly* on him he was afraid *of so sudden an appearance and august form*, and said, *notwithstanding*, What is it, Lord *you would intend by this*? And he, *from above*, said unto him, Thy repeated fervent prayers and thine alms *from an upright (l)*, though imperfect<sup>c</sup> state both of belief and practice, are come up to heaven (m) as incense, for what may be compared to a (n) fragrant memorial before the omniscient God. And now (o), *to be convinced of this*, send some of thy men to Joppa, and call for one (p) Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one of his own<sup>d</sup> name, Simon (q), by trade a tanner, whose house is near by the sea-side: he shall tell thee *by divine direction* what thou oughtest to do *for a pure and endless felicity*. And, when the bright angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he instantly called two of his household servants, and a devout (r) soldier<sup>e</sup> of them that waited on him *for more immediate and interesting orders* continually. And, when he had declared all these things unto them *which were spoken by the celestial messenger*, he, *that very evening*, sent them off to Joppa.

(l) See verse 45. chap. xi. 3. (m) Comp. Deut. viii. 3. 4. Rev. v. 8. viii. 3. (n) Metaphorical, see verse 41. (o) See Mark ix. 5. (p) He was not to be an apostle, and therefore not immediately instructed from above, like Paul. (q) Comp. chap. xi. 14. (r) Rare epithet, see Matth. viii. 9.

#### REFLECTIONS.

such things, as none except worthy persons ever observe. A solid virtue is preferable by far to rigorous severities, however apparently expressive of piety and devotion. <sup>c</sup> God puts new means of improvement in the way of those who are sincere. <sup>d</sup> Men are not left in the manner pretended by enthusiasts, to believe without reason. They who are of no great estimation with the world, may be in high favour with Almighty God. <sup>e</sup> No lawful employments are incompatible with pure undefiled religion; though they may have peculiar and strong temptations. The pious love to be engaged about what, in a direct manner, concerns the Almighty.

## SECT. XLIX. FROM VERSE IX.

ON the morrow, as they went farther on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up, *for the sake of greater freedom*, upon the (a) flat house-top to pray, about the sixth (b) hour. And he, *who rose betimes*, became very hungry, and would gladly have eaten (c) some little food : but, while within house they made ready for that purpose, he fell into a <sup>a</sup> trance, or extacy of mind, and thereby became insensible to every thing about him : during which space, he saw, by strength of imagination (d), heaven opened, and a certain vessel (e) descending from thence unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down leisurely to the earth ; wherein were (f) all manner of four-footed (g) beasts of the earth, and wild (h) beasts, and (i) creeping things, and (j) fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him from above, saying, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat, *being so very hungry, of all those without distinction ; be not afraid, do not scruple*. But Peter supposing this to be done by way of trial, said, in a fervour of pious zeal, Not so (k), Lord, *is it possible for me to act who believe thy divine law ; for, thou who knowest all things dost know, that from the day of my birth I have never yet eaten any thing that is common to other nations, or declared to be unclean<sup>b</sup>, by express Mosaic statute.*

(a) Such were most, if not the whole of these in Judea ; see Mat. x. 27. Dan. vi. 11. (b) That is noon, our twelve o'clock. Another for Jewish public prayer, comp. chap. iii. 1. (c) Greek, tasted ; but often more largely extended, as in Luke xiv. 24. 2 Pet. ii. 3. Psal. xxxiv. 9. Heb. vi. 4, 5. (d) For similar visions : see Mat. iii. 16. Acts vii. 56. (e) Comp. Hof. ii. 3, 9. (f) Or kinds, Isa. ii. 2. (g) Domestic, and yet prohibited by way of food, like swine, camels, dogs, horses, &c. (h) As hares, rabbits, boars, wolves, lions, &c. (i) As serpents, frogs. (k) As eagles, crows, &c. see Lev. chap. xi. Signifying together, men of every nation, and

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> God discloseth not his secrets of divine knowledge to the luxurious and slothful. <sup>b</sup> It is no uncommon thing, to see a

And the voice spake unto him again the second time, *saying, What God hath now cleansed for universal use, that call not thou (l) henceforth, either by word or deed, common. This for evidence' sake and to impress his mind the more, was done no less than (m) thrice, so that there could be no mistake; and then the vessel was received up again out of sight into heaven. Now, while Peter, being come to his usual state of mind, doubted in himself what this very singular vision which he had seen by rapturous extacy should mean, behold, the men, which were sent, as above set forth, from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house in which he lodged, and, already stood before the gate (n) of it, and called one of the domestics, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.*

#### SECT. L. FROM VERSE XIX.

WHILE Peter thought on *what the vision might be designed to instruct*, the Spirit of God, by a secret impulse, said unto him <sup>a</sup>, Behold, three men below seek

even manner of life. sinners not excepted. (l) See Matth. x. 22. (m) Esteem not. The application of this, would soon become easy, see verse 20 Lev. xiii. 3. 8, 11, 15, 20, &c. (n) Comp. Gen. xli. 32. 2 Cor. xii. 8. (o) See Mat. x. 32.

#### REFLECTIONS.

good man for a time, misled by the force of prejudice. Scruples which grow up from infancy, are not easily got over. Whence the Jews, for a time were indulged to observe the ceremonial law. God ever makes use of the most gentle and natural gradations. In stooping to prejudices, and bearing with infirmities, the divine condescension is to be admired. Prayer and alms are more grateful, than steams of the most costly sacrifices. A clear revelation of the mind and will of God, is an unspeakable advantage. The Gentiles gathered into Christ's church, is to be thought of with gratitude and high delight. Honest retirement sought after to pray, is pleasant to the Almighty, Psal. lv. 17.

<sup>a</sup> Providence renders many things plain by process which at first seem dark and unaccountable.

thee for important ends. Arise, therefore, from thy present thoughtful state, and get thee down instantly, and go with them agreeable to their desire, doubting (a) nothing, because they are strangers, of what they shall say unto thee; for I, whom you so honestly serve, have sent them. Then Peter went down with speed to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius, and, while they still continued at the door, said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek for: Declare then what is the cause wherefore ye are come hither? And they said, in these few plain words, Cornelius the centurion, a (b) just man<sup>b</sup>, and one that feareth the true God, and of good report, though a foreigner, among all the nation of the Jews (c), who have access to know him well, was yesterday (d) warned from God by the mission of an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of instruction from thee, how hereafter he should conduct himself. Then called he them in, and, with consent of his host, humanely lodged them for that night. And on the morrow Peter went away with them to Cornelius, at Cesarea, and certain Christian<sup>c</sup> brethren from Joppa, as witnesses (e), accompanied him thither. And the morrow after this, they entered into Cesarea. And good Cornelius anxiously waited for them whom he had sent to know what their success was, and, hoping the best, he<sup>d</sup> had, by this time, called together a number of (f) his intimate kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in

(a) Greek, judging; for such a state divides the mind with sentiments, see verse 28. chap. xiii. 2, 4. xx. 28. James i. 6. (b) See verse 3. (c) Comp. Luke vii. 5. (d) See Mat. ii. 12. (e) See chap. xi. 12. A most prudent measure. (f) Comp. Josh. ii. 12,

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> To conciliate regard for those whom we would serve, is a most prudent step. The apostles did not rashly, but by clear commandment of God, receive the Gentiles into the benefit of the gospel. Ministers should be desirous to save all sorts of men. Blessed are they who preserve an open impartial mind for truth, John viii. 32. <sup>c</sup> Difficulties require advice and concurrence of friends, Rom. xiv. 16. <sup>d</sup> It is of the nature



*to the vestibule, Cornelius met him there, with ardour, and respectfully, even nigh to adoration, fell down at his feet, and (g) worshipped him. But Peter in haste took him up from the ground, saying, Stand up, and give not even such an offence by thy lowly and grateful regards (h); for I myself also<sup>e</sup>, whom thou dost thus over-rate, am a man like unto thee, and thy fellow servant. And as he talked with him he went yet farther in, and (i) found many familiars seated, that were come together for spiritual benefit. And he said unto them, Ye cannot but know how that it is deemed by us an unlawful thing for a man that is a (j) Jew to keep familiar company, or even come unto the house of one of another nation; but God, of late and in clear manner (k), hath shewed me that I should not so in time coming call any man, and far less treat them as common<sup>e</sup> only for being uncircumcised (l) or wickedly unclean. Therefore, regarding the command of him who is sole supreme above all human traditions, came I unto you without gainsaying (m) either more or less, as soon as I was sent for (n): I ask, therefore, to be more fully satisfied, for what<sup>s</sup> intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius frankly said, Nearest now*

13. (g) Did him obeisance. Meaning thus to honour the Almighty, through his servant, see verse v. 6. comp. Gen. xxiii. 7. (h) Amiably modest in Peter, especially considering 2 Kings i. 13. iv. 37. see Matth. ii. 2, 11. Rev xix. 10. (i) See verse 24. (j) This was not scripture law properly, but tradition, comp. John xviii. 28. 2 Mac. x 2, 5. (k) See verse 15. (l) Comp. Tit. i. 15. 2 Thes. iii. 6, 14 (m) Comp. Ec. viii. 11. (n) This would give occasion for

#### REFLECTIONS.

of pure godly love, to be communicative, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. <sup>e</sup> How much is wanting in the pretended successors of Peter, who require what he refused? With every respect for Christ's Ministers, the glory due to God, must not be given to man. A wise familiarity leads to great freedom of speech, and profitable. We should avoid giving offence, and stablish the weak in confidence as much as may be. <sup>e</sup> It is God who maketh every thing holy. High matters of religion ought not to be communicated, till people shew themselves desirous to learn. <sup>e</sup> Ro-

to four days ago (*o*) I was fasting like other converts to a pure Jewish faith until this very hour; and at the ninth hour, agreeable to their example likewise, I prayed in my house, and, behold, to my unspeakable surprise, an angel in form of a man, as was made out to me afterwards, stood before me in (*p*) bright clothing, and said, in soft gentle manner, Cornelius, thy (*q*) prayer is heard, with acceptance for thine own and the salvation of thy family, and thine alms are had in like gracious remembrance (*r*) in the sight of God. Send, therefore, by way of immediate important token, to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh (*s*), shall speak at large of various new things unto thee. Immediately (*t*), therefore, I sent to thee, having such an order; and thou hast both piously and kindly (*u*) well done, for my sake and the sake of my numerous dear friends, that thou art thus come<sup>h</sup>. Now, therefore, are we all here present as before God (*x*) disposed to hear and to obey, without reserve, all things that are commanded thee of God for our benefit.

#### SECT. LI. FROM VERSE XXXIV.

THEN Peter (*a*) opened his mouth, and said in solemn manner, as became so important a subject: Of a truth I now perceive from experience, the meaning of my late

Cornelius to declare the divine orders; and for Peter to discourse religiously. (*o*) See Lev. xxiii. 12. (*p*) Comp. Luke xxiv. 4. Acts i. 10. (*q*) See verse iv. Rev. xvi. 19. (*r*) Comp. Gen. viii. 1 xix. 29. (*s*) See verse 5, 6. (*t*) So Mark vi. 25. Acts xi. 11. Phil. ii. 23. Others, from that same hour. (*u*) Comp. 2 Pet. i. 19. 3. John 6. (*x*) Comp. Josh ii. 12, 13. Some read before thee.

(*a*) See chap. viii. 35. Mat. v. 2. applied to what is great.

#### REFLECTIONS.

petition, in certain cases, gives spirit and delight to discourse.  
<sup>h</sup> A humble subjection of soul to divine authority, is the most proper we can bring to the house of God. It is conciliating to decline an excess even of civil homage, as imparting a simple modest disposition.

*enigmatical vision, that Almighty God, the benevolent father of mankind, is no respecter of persons (b), who prefers one to another from causes which are wholly out of their own power to avoid: but in every nation (c), as well as that of Israel, he that feareth like a son, so as uprightly to worship him, and worketh<sup>a</sup> righteousness, from that divine principle, in the habit of their lives, is accepted with him (d). The pure gospel (e) word then, be pleased to understand, which God sent (f) unto the children of Israel (g), preaching extensive (h) peace to fallen men by Jesus Christ his prime ambassador; (even he who is now constituted (i) Lord<sup>b</sup> of all (j);) that word, I say, and ye Jews know, at least in part, which was published throughout all Judea, and (k) began*

(b) Or faces; as on account of form, beauty, notions, birth, riches, &c. see Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. Job xxxiv. 39. Rom. ii. 11. (c) Comp. Matth. iii. 9. (d) Comp. Prov. x. 25. Luke iv. 24. Phil. iv. 18. (e) See chap. xiii. 26. (f) Comp. Psal. cvii. 20. Matth. viii. 12. John xi. 32. (g) The descendants of Abraham, by him, chap. iii. 26. xiii. 32, 46. (h) Comprehensive of all happiness, see Luke ii. 14. Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 17. Rom. x. 12. John xiv. 27. (i) Comp. Acts ii. 36. Dan. vii. 13, 14. Matth. xxviii. 18, &c. (j) verſe xxiii. chap. xxvi. 26. More distinctly now made known to them than ever, comp. Matth. viii. 11, 12. John x. 16. xii. 32. (k) Word, or thing, as in Gen. xviii. 14. Exod. ix.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Good works from pious motives, are necessary to obtain the divine favour. God doth profer his love to the worst, upon faith and repentance, Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 10. In every case, probity, or sincere inclination to know and do his will, is requisite, John vii. 17. True piety consists in the practice of Christian virtues. It is the spirit of fanaticism to prefer what pleases sense and imagination to what is moral. God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it. A great use of terror this, to those who reject Christianity. Filial fear is best expressed by works of righteousness, and to be regarded impartially, James iii. 17. <sup>b</sup> Jesus Lord of all, is to be believed in, obeyed, trusted. What the Jews did from malevolence, became, through divine love, a source of manifold unspeakable advantages, Luke xxiv. 46. 1 Cor. i. 23,

from Galilee, after the *preparatory* baptism unto repentance which John preached (*l*), *must still continue*; how that God (*m*) anointed Jesus of Nazareth (*n*) with the Holy Ghost, and (*o*) with power by that means without measure, to discharge his important office; who went about our whole country<sup>c</sup> doing every kind of good, and, in particular, miraculously healing all that were oppressed of the devil (*p*): for God Most High, and his Father, was ever (*q*) with him to produce such mighty works. And we apostolical disciples, with many others, are eye and ear (*r*) witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews throughout, and in Jerusalem the capital itself; whom, though so powerful and beneficent a divine ambassador, they, the rulers of Israel, by means of an intimidated Roman governor, slew most unrighteously, and even hanged, like one of the vilest malefactors, by cruel ignominious crucifixion (*s*), on a tree<sup>d</sup>; him, thus unworthily despised and rejected of men, God, even the Father, raised up the third day, as was often foretold (*t*), from death, in testimony of his most signal approbation, and, afterwards (*u*) shewed him openly; not indeed to all the

4. &c. Luke i. 37. Hebraism (*l*) For accomplishing Matth. viii. 11, 12. see note (*j*). This, for some time, was hid from the Jewish converts, and applied only to those of that nation who were scattered abroad, Acts ix. 19. (*m*) In manner of the ancient prophets, priests and kings; see Luke iv. 18. Isa. xlii. 1, &c. lxi. 1, &c. (*n*) Educated there (*o*) Comp. Luke i. 17. 35 most powerful Spirit, Acts i. 8. (*p*) This being among the greatest sort, comprehends all the rest, see Matth. xii. 29. Luke x. 17. (*q*) See Acts ii. 22. Expression of singular grace, or favour, Gen. xxxix. 21, 23. Acts vii. 9. Mat. iii. 17. John xi. 42. (*r*) Therefore cannot be deceived, chap. v. 32. (*s*) See chap. v. 30. What just ground had they to complain of calling the Gentiles? (*t*) So chap. ii. 24, 32. He was not to see corruption by lying long. (*u*) See Luke xxiv. 36. John

#### REFLECTIONS.

24. <sup>c</sup> Christ's miracles were not of the amazing and showy kind only; but in the pure beneficent spirit of his divine religion. The proper arguments for convincing Gentiles first, were those taken from Christ's person, miracles, and resurrection. They only are genuine disciples of Christ, who imitate him. <sup>d</sup> See note <sup>b</sup>.

*Jewish people, whose prejudices and determined unbelief had rendered most unworthy, but unto witnesses well qualified by their uprightness and fortitude, and therefore (x) chosen before of God to satisfy others, even to us, apostles, who did often (y) eat and drink with him<sup>c</sup> whom we so well knew prior to his crucifixion and after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us (z), when about to leave the world and go to his Father, to preach unto the people of every nation, and to testify, in an explicit earnest manner, with all suitable evidence, that it is he which was ordained of God, infinitely wise and good, to be the glorious majestic judge (a) in time coming (b) of both quick and dead. To him, moreover, gave all the ancient venerable (c) prophets witness<sup>f</sup>, that, through his (d) authoritative name, whosoever obediently believeth in him, be they Jew or Gentile, shall receive (e) remis-*

xx. 19, 20. (x) Alluding to the manner in which votes of approbation are given, by holding up hands. (y) Luke xxiv. 42, 43. 1 John i. 1. (z) See Mat. xxviii. 18, &c. (a) The rewarder of the good, and punisher of the wicked, John v. 22. 27. Matth. xxv. 31, &c. Under which governing is comprehended, as well as deciding controversies; comp. 1 Sam. viii. 5. Psal. lxxii. 12. (b) See 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12, 13. (c) As in Isa. liii. 4, 5. verse 31, 33, 34. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xiii. 1. Mal. iii. 1, 3, 5. And David often in the Psalms, Luke xxiv. 23, 26, 27. Acts iii. 18, 24. (d) Comp. chap. iii. 16. xiii. 38, 39. (e) Such first justification

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> The slowness of the apostles themselves to believe, should strengthen our faith. It was impossible to feign such an event; and they attested it with their blood, Acts v. 28. Matth. xxvii. 64. Every circumstance of former reproach against Christ, was done away by his glorious resurrection. Miracles done by the apostles, in the name of Christ, were more than if he had appeared to the whole Jewish nation. Having suffered with Christ in duty, we shall reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. God is under no obligation to humour the wantonness of men, in the affair of evidence. <sup>f</sup> Miracles should be urged as a first proof, and then prophecies; especially with Jews, John iii. 2. What terms can evince more clearly, that our happiness depends upon an humble subjection

tion of sins, however heinous, that are past <sup>2</sup>, deliverance from wrath, and the sure possession of life everlasting.

## SECT. LII. FROM VERSE XLIV.

WHILE Peter yet spake these *and like* words, *the gifts* of the Holy Ghost <sup>a</sup> fell from above, in large abundance (a), on all them which heard with conviction (b) the true gospel word. And they of the (c) circumcision, which then and formerly believed, were astonished to a great degree, as many, in particular, as came with Peter from Joppa, because that on the uncircumcised Gentiles also was (d) poured out from on high the unquestionable gift of the Holy Ghost. For, of a sudden they heard them speak with tongues new and various, (e) and by these too magnify, in praise (f), the glorious Lord God. Then answered Peter, upon a call of heaven so perfectly amazing, Can any man now, who thinks at all, forbid the emblematical ordinance of water (g), that

is by faith alone, without works of the law, Rom. iii. 28, 22. Gal. ii. 16. But that which is powerful in good works, only can avail to final acceptance, Gal. v. 6. 1 John iii. 23. James ii. 14, 17, 24, 26

(a) Perhaps in visible manner, see chap. xi. 15. This soon appeared by wonderful effects; as in verse 46. chap. xix. 6. ix. 17. The Jews had a proverb among them, that the Holy Spirit would not dwell upon any Heathen; nor even upon any Jew, in a Heathen country. (b) Comp. chap. xv. 9. Gal. iii. 2, 5. They were born of the Spirit, even before they were born of water. (c) Or Jews, Rom. iii. 30. iv. 9. (d) See chap. ii. 17, 33, 38. (e) Comp. Mark xvi. 17. (f) See Acts ii. 11. (g) Comp.

## REFLECTIONS.

of soul to Christ? <sup>2</sup> The remedy of the gospel is both sure and easy.

<sup>a</sup> The word of God is quick and powerful among people of good and honest hearts. Here was a demonstration that Jesus reigned in heaven, by whom Peter so successfully taught, see chap. ii. 33, &c. The Spirit is a sweet and sure pledge of divine love, Eph. i. 13, 14. ii. 13, 14. Rom. v. 5. viii. 15, 16.

<sup>b</sup> The height of arrogance, is to deny those religious communion, and distinguishing ordinances, whom God doth seal by

these, brought over to divine truth, should not be forth-  
with baptized as it requires, even they which have re-  
ceived (b) distinct gifts of the Holy Ghost as well as  
we<sup>b</sup>? And, none of the brethren objecting, he command-  
ed them, in some proper place, to be baptized (i) by one  
or other of the disciples, in the (j) name of Jesus Christ,  
the common Lord. Then prayed they him with great  
earnestness, whom Cornelius had brought together, to tarry<sup>c</sup>  
for good company and agreeable useful instruction (k), certain  
days more with them.

## C H A P. XI.

## SECT. LIII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND, during this abode, the apostles and other Chris-  
tian (a) brethren that were nearest to Peter in Ju-  
dea heard, with some alarm, that the uncircumcised Gen-  
tiles had also received by faith the (b) gospel word of  
God, with visible signs of its most important blessings. And  
when Peter was come up from Cesarea, to the church in  
Jerusalem, from (c) visiting certain in the neighbourhood,  
they that were of the circumcision (d) contended vi-

Luke vi. 29. (b) These usually did follow after baptism, chap.  
ii. 38. viii. 15, &c. It was proper that circumcised believers should  
have no room for disputing their right. (i) Comp. Acts viii. 12,  
38. (j) To be henceforth understood, as his professed followers,  
chap. ii. 38. Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27. and comprehends the Fa-  
ther, who anointed with the Holy Ghost. Thus Peter led the  
way to the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. The first fruits  
might obtain, by the Spirit, skill in the Hebrew language and pro-  
phesies, see chap. xix. 25. (k) A favour granted, as appears from  
chap. xii. 3. How blameably therefore did he act, Gal. ii. 11, &c.

(a) Sons of the same heavenly Father, Mat. xxiii. 8. John i.  
12. (b) Or accepted, see chap. x. 45. (c) See chap. ix. 32. (d) Or  
expostulated, comp. Rom. xiv. 1. Acts x. 45. The Jews, from

## REFLECTIONS.

his spirit, see chap. xi. 17. Gal. iii. 2, 5. <sup>c</sup> So, by actions, ought  
we to teach what is lawful.

*olently with him, as a transgressor of the Mosaic law, saying, under surprise and displeasure<sup>a</sup>, Thou wentest in, as guest to men who had not the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, but were uncircumcised, and didst familiarly eat with them. But Peter, with great condescendence, rehearsed the matter so lately transacted, from the beginning, and expounded it (e) by clear and distinct order unto them<sup>b</sup>, saying (f), I was in a retired place of the city of Joppa praying : and in a trance I saw a remarkable vision, That of a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners ; and it came even close to me : Upon the which, when I had most attentively fastened mine eyes, I considered the affair with leisure, and saw various kinds of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, which our law prohibits the use of for food. And I heard a voice from above, saying unto me, Arise, Peter ; slay of what is now before thee, and freely eat. But I said, Not so, Lord : for, as yet, nothing understood to be legally common or unclean hath at any time entered (g) into my mouth. But the voice (h) of him that spake, answered*

prophecy, might believe, that Gentiles were to be converted to Christ, but still to observe like themselves, the Mosaic ceremonies ; nor, even then, to be placed in the same high rank of privileges, comp. Heb. iii. 5, 6. (e) See Luke i. 3. (f) See chap. x. 16, &c. (g) Consider chap. x. 14. (h) Comp. chap. x. 15. Rev. i.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Let us always guard against the narrowness of mind which would even limit God and exclude others from his favour. The catholic nature of the gospel must be matter of joy to all who love God and man. <sup>b</sup> He assigns not his mere will to them for a reason, but acts as one brother to another. A naturally warm temper is peculiarly adorned by a mild prudent manner. Even the apostles stood not upon the general honour of their rank to insist for implicit submission. Our best actions, when uncandidly mistaken, ought to be vindicated in the spirit of gentleness, humility, and love. Let us never be disobedient, from human considerations, to any clear intimation of the divine will, especially as to what respects Christian communion.



me again from heaven, What God hath graciously cleansed, by so clear a permission, that call not thou henceforth common, nor do thou treat it after such improper manner. And this was done, with the same circumstances, no less than three times : and then all, both vessel and what it contained (i) were drawn up again apparently into heaven. And, behold, immediately as the vision terminated, there were three men already come unto the door of the house where I was, sent from Cornelius of Cæsarea unto me. And the blessed divine Spirit, by strong internal impulse, bade me go with them, nothing now doubting of the will of heaven upon this point. Moreover, these six Christian brethren, who are of Judea, accompanied me, for witnessing, first from Joppa to Cæsarea, and afterwards from thence unto Jerusalem ; and, while at Cæsarea, we entered into the man's house, for which ye now blame me : and he shewed us, upon proper inquisition, how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood upon the flat inclosed roof, and said unto him, Send men quickly to Joppa, and there let them call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ; who shall tell thee words of doctrine and precept, whereby (j) not only thou but all the persons of thy house, come to years, shall be everlastingly saved. And as I began to speak (k) with some suitable length and seriousness, the Holy Ghost by undoubted miraculous gifts, fell on them, even as on us apostolical ministers at the (l) beginning. Then remembered I clearly, and with great delight, the word of the Lord Jesus, how that he said just before (m) his ascension up on high, John indeed baptized with water unto repentance ; but ye, my disciples both from among

12. (i) See chap. x. 16. (j) Or, in which, as Lev. xviii. 5. Rom. x. 5. more full than chap. x. 6, 32. (k) Chap. x. from verse 34, to 44th, comp chap. i. 1. (l) Not absolutely, but officiating after Christ's ascension, see chap. ii. 1, &c. John xv. 27. xvi. 4, &c. (m) Acts i. 5. Luke xxiv. 49.

## REFLECTIONS.

\* They are happy whose defence stands upon a clear divine

*Jews and Gentiles, shall be baptized with the powerful gifts of the Holy Ghost, for leading to perfect holiness in life everlasting (n). Forasmuch then as God, the supreme all-wise dispenser, gave them (o) who have turned from dead idols the like precious gift of the Spirit as he did unto us of the circumcision, before that, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I a poor insignificant creature<sup>d</sup> that I could presume to withstand the gracious pleasure of our dear sovereign, Almighty God? When they, who came to accuse, heard these convincing things they held their peace from any further blame, and, not only so, but even glorified God, by praise, saying, with devout rapture, Then hath God, infinitely wise and good, also to the poor Gentiles, by<sup>e</sup> faith, granted, no less than to us Jews, the benefits of repentance (p) unto sure and everlasting life.*

#### SECT. LIV. FROM VERSE XIX.

NOW they which were scattered abroad from Jerusalem through other countries, upon the<sup>a</sup> persecution that arose (a) about the death of Stephen, travelled, some of them, as far as Phenice (b) on the sea-coast of Sy-

(n) Greek, if, as in Mat. xxi. 8 Jo. x. 35. put for since. (o) See verse 15. Gal. iii. 2. 5. (p) Or a repentance for life, comp chap. v. 31. The means of both perfectly sufficient, as in 1 Tim. iv. 10. 1sa. xxiv. 13. comp. Deut. xxix. 4. God by Christ, or his gospel, hath granted to the Gentiles, a gracious call to repentance, to which he has promised eternal life, as well as the pardon of past sins.

(a) See chap. viii. 1, &c. (b) Whereof Tyre was the capital; chap.

#### REFLECTIONS.

command, like chap. x. 9, &c. <sup>d</sup> As a faithful servant should do nothing rashly, so neither have they right to gainsay, but wholly to depend upon the will of their Lord. <sup>e</sup> Repentance is the fruit of genuine faith. It is glorious to yield to the force of evidence, even when it leads to an unexpected path. No delight of this world is so valuable as that of godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation.

<sup>a</sup> God by over-ruling evil measures, did advance his gospel.

ria, and the (c) island Cyprus, and Antioch (d), preaching the *evangelical* word to none but unto the Jews by nation and language only. And some of them were men of that sort whom various causes had dispersed to Cyprus and even (e) Cyrene of Africa, which, having heard of Peter's example, when they were come to Antioch spake unto the (f) Grecians also, whom divine goodness had before this converted from Heathenism (g), preaching <sup>b</sup> the doctrine of the Lord Jesus. And the powerful quickening hand of the Lord was with them <sup>c</sup>, to render their pious labours eminently beneficial: and, through grace, a great number of such proselytes believed the gospel report, and turned submissively unto the Lord Jesus.

#### SECT. LV. FROM VERSE XXII.

THEN tidings of these (a) very new things came unto the ears of the *Christian* church which was at Jerusalem, and used frequently to meet for worship there: and they sent forth (b) Barnabas, that he should go from thence as far as <sup>a</sup> Antioch, to support, by his superior au-

xxi. 2. Bordering upon Palestine, if not a part of it. (c) A large one, in the Mediterranean sea. (d) Metropolis of Syria when under the Roman government, next in greatness and beauty to Rome and Alexandria: built by Seleucus Nicanor, one of Alexander's chief generals, and after his death, denominated Antioch from his father. (e) See Matth. xxvii. 32. This seems to have been the fruit of an impulsive laudible zeal, see verse 29. Many who heard them speak to the Jews, might appear much affected. (f) Comp. chap. vi. 1, ix. 29 (g) This was somewhat beyond the bounds even of an ordinary mission, chap. v. 42. (b) Comp. chap. iii. 19.

(a) Narrated, verse 21. (b) See chap. iv. 36, 37. ix. 27.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> Even where the bounds of an ordinary mission are exceeded, there may be remarkable success; see verse xxi. This itself seems to warrant a call as good. Hence see how the blood of a single martyr became as seed to the church. <sup>c</sup> All success originally, is to be traced up to the hand of God.

<sup>a</sup> Good Christians, and more especially good ministers, are

thority, what had been so well begun by others. Who, when he came thither, and had seen, by wonderful and various good effects, the grace of God in converting so many Grecians of that large city<sup>b</sup>, was exceedingly glad, and exhorted them all, who now professed the gospel, that with firm purpose of heart, whatever difficulties should arise, they would cleave unto the (c) doctrine and precepts of their blessed Lord. For accomplishing all which he was admirably qualified<sup>c</sup>, being a good affectionately benevolent man, and full of divine spiritual gifts from the (d) Holy Ghost, and of (e) faith unfeigned: and much more people than even formerly was added by means of his pious labours unto the church of the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus (f), a city of Cilicia, for to seek his dear friend Saul carefully out (g) in that place of his birth. And when he had found him there, he brought him readily unto the same good work of the Most High God in<sup>d</sup> Antioch. And it came to pass, that for the space of a whole year they assembled themselves (h) at proper times with the church, and taught successfully much people who came unto them. And the disciples (i) of Je-

(c) Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 1c. (d) See chap. vi. 5, 8. (e) Or steadfast fidelity. (f) See chap. xxi. 39. (g) See chap. ix. 27, 3c. (h) Or they met as a congregation. (i) See chap. vi. 1, 2. ix. 1, 1c, 19, 26, 36, 38. Styled until now, believers, disciples, or Ga-

#### REFLECTIONS.

close intent upon serving their master. This is done, by a large increase of knowledge, and pious virtue. <sup>b</sup> To godly souls, full of divine glory and the good of mankind, no source of pleasure is so exquisite as the success of religion in the world: They do truly breathe the divine spirit. *Mart. in Palestine*. Indeed, what is the triumph of the gospel, but the triumph of human happiness. *Doddridge*. To adhere to the Lord at all times, requires steady resolution, Heb. x. 23. <sup>c</sup> They speak with great authority, who speak from the experience of their own heart, and can refer to an exemplary life. <sup>d</sup> The prospect of a rich spiritual harvest, provokes to ministerial diligence.

*us* were called from him, *their* glorious master (*j*), Christians first in Antioch.

## SECT. LVI. FROM VERSE XXVII.

AND in those days (*a*) of *their* sacred ministration, there came (*b*) prophets, who not only explained mysteries by divine revelation, but foretold things to come, from the capital, Jerusalem, unto Antioch. And there (*c*) stood up one of them, in a numerous meeting of believers, named (*d*) Agabus, and signified by direction of the Holy Spirit, that, as an awful scourge of heaven, there should soon be a great harassing dearth of every kind of food throughout all the (*e*) then known world: which

lileans. (*j*) From the anointed of God, about the 4000 year of the world; and beginning of the reign of Claudius, verse 28. This honourable name, however, was not soon frequent among the apostles and their companions. Only to be met with twice in the New Testament, Acts xxvi. 28. 1 Pet. iv. 16 among themselves, disciples and brethren often. By adversaries, Nazarenes, Acts xxiv. 5. Possibly not without a divine admonition, were they called Christians, comp. Mat. ii. 12, 23. Luke ii. 2, 6. Acts x. 22.

(*a*) Supposed by some, to be the tenth year from the death and resurrection of Christ. (*b*) Comp. chap. xiii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 32. Eph iv. 11. Next in order to apostles. (*c*) See chap. v. 17. (*d*) Hebrew, Hagabus, 1 Efd. ii. 45. (*e*) Or most of it. It so raged among the Roman people, that they rose up against Claudius Cesar, Suet. ch. xviii. Sub. Claudio. Comp. Dion. l. vi. Joseph. Ant. l. xx. c. 2. With peculiar violence it was felt in and about Judea.

## REFLECTIONS.

\* This is that sacred honourable name, which all professing belief of the gospel are entitled to; and they wrong them much who give a different one. Hereby Christians are dignified. In its genuine and original meaning, it includeth every thing that is virtuous and amiable; just and charitable; noble and divine! Would to God Christ had been the only master in whose name Christians had ever gloried! Then strife and contention would have ceased, nor would enemies have had cause to triumph. The very name ought to command respect. Lesser differences should not make us forget what we thus hold.

*accordingly came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar (f) the reigning emperor. Then the disciples of a benevolent Saviour, such of them as lived out of Judea, and those of Antioch in particular, every man according to his ability<sup>a</sup>, determined to send relief (g), by liberal contribution, unto the Christian brethren (h) which dwelt in Judea, whence the sound of the gospel first came out, and whose straits they knew, under so great a trial added to the violence of their enemies, would be very clamant: which good purpose also they did execute, and sent what arose from it to the ministering (i) elders of those parts<sup>b</sup>, by the hands of their two excellent pastors Barnabas and Saul.*

(f) Or while he governed as Emperor, after Caligula (g) They had not now, therefore, all things in common, comp. Acts xv. 1, &c. see Rom. xii. 7. (h) Children in a special sense, of the same heavenly Father. Rom. xv. 27. (i) The principal, or leading men of this congregation, chap. xiv. 23. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. It was not necessary that Paul should mention this journey, Gal. i. 18.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Whatever one can spare from his own necessary uses, leaves enough behind. To minister by food or other alms to the poor, is an essential duty, Acts vi. 1. 2 Cor. viii. 4. ix. 1, 12. Heb. vi. 10. Particular favour is due to those who, under God, have been the earliest or best instruments of spiritual good. Divine providence adapts the common course of things so as to subserve his own great and beneficent designs. This would conciliate Jewish to Gentile converts, and unite them close under one common head. Here the excellence and usefulness of the prophetic spirit was obvious. Extraordinary difficulties and discouragements require extraordinary aids: It is one church's duty to own others of Christ, and every way to aid them, Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Pet. v. 13. Gal. iii. 28. 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 9. 3 John 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, &c. Col. iv. 16, 17. <sup>b</sup> They who have been merciful, meet with it in their turn, Acts iv. 32. Phil. ii. 14. Proven spiritual exercise, is worthy of high trust.

## C H A P. XII.

## SECT. LVII. FROM VERSE I.

**N**OW, about that time of the famine (a) which had been foretold, Herod Agrippa the (b) king stretched forth his hands (c) with violence<sup>a</sup> to vex certain of the Christian church in Jerusalem; and, in particular, he killed James the (d) elder, brother of John, with the (e) sword. And, as an enemy to religion and the state, only because he saw it pleased the unbelieving Jews, he proceeded further to take<sup>b</sup> the apostle Peter (f) also into custody. (Then were the days begun of keeping the Passover by unleavened bread.) And, when he had apprehended him, he gave orders to put him in close prison, and delivered him, for greater security, to (g) four

(a) chap. xi. 28. (b) Son of Aristobolus, by Mariamne, and grandson of Herod, commonly called the Great. He had the title of king granted to him, by C. Caligula Cesar, and his territories much enlarged. (c) Comp. Gen. iii. 22 Luke ix. 62 (d) Both sons of Zebedee, comp Mat. xx. 23. This murder is narrated by Josephus. Even miraculous powers were not always to secure the apostles. (e) A punishment adopted by the Jews from neighbouring nations. This Herod was a kind of zealot for the Mosaic law, *Joseph. Ant.* l. xix. Hereby the number of the apostles of the circumcision was reduced to eleven; for we do not find that any other was substituted in his stead; nor had the apostles any successors in their apostolical office, authority and dignity. (f) Comp. Luke xx. 12. (g) That is, sixteen soldiers who were to guard him; four at a time,

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> Days of special joy, are often followed with heavy trials; Eccl. vii. 14. To be early dismissed from mortal life and labour, is what may happen to choice favourites of heaven! They who reject a good message, come very soon to hate the messenger; and is a sure token of wrath, Matth. xxiii. 32.  
<sup>b</sup> By persecution the name of Jesus became still more glorious. They who freely speak the truth, are most in danger from tyrants. Some men are afraid to break an holy day, who are not afraid to sacrifice an innocent life or character. People are guilty of murder, who have determined it in their hearts. Who but a bad man would persecute religion, says Lactantius?

quaternions of soldiers to keep him *by turns*, intending (b) *immediately* after Easter-service, to bring (i) him forth as a *second martyr* to the gratification of his people. Peter, therefore, was kept by these Jewish enemies in prison, and with anxious care till he should be executed; but intense prayer was made<sup>c</sup>, for so excellent a person, without ceasing (j) of the church of Christ at Jerusalem unto Almighty God for delivering him from death. And when Herod would have brought him forth to suffer, the same<sup>d</sup> night Peter was found sleeping, like one with a good conscience, and engaged in a good cause, between two foldiers, who were bound one to each arm with two (k) strong chains: and the keepers besides, before<sup>e</sup> the door, to prevent his movement without their notice, kept the prison shut against all his friends upon that

(b) After the whole passover solemnity was over? which continued 2 week, from first to last. (i) Comp. verse 19. Matth. xxvi. c. (j) They were frequent and fervent, comp. Luke xxii 44. Acts xxvi. 7. (k) In common cases, prisoners were only bound to one.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> A common cause claims affectionate regard. Piety and mutual love, avail much with Almighty God. Nothing but what is good, should we even wish to those who pursue us with hatred and cruelties. For like reason that church members are bound to support and encourage their pastors under afflictions, they ought ever to treat them with distinguishing honour, esteem, and love, 1 Cor. iv. 1. 1 Tim. v. 17.; cordially to receive their administrations, so far as consists with rights of conscience, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. Heb. xiii. 17, 7. to follow them in good, 1 Cor. xi. 1 to pray heartily for them, 1 Thess. v. 25. 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. to provide liberally for them, Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 7, 13, &c. Matth. x. 10. to converse at times freely, yet modestly, Heb. x. 24, 25. Mal. iii. 16. Mat. xviii. 19, 20. to cultivate peace and harmony, Eph. iv. 3. Rom. xiv. 19. Already the gospel success became so considerable, as to alarm both policy and superstition. They who inquire not into the true state of things, take up with passionate and hasty measures. <sup>d</sup> Faith and confidence are both wisely and mercifully tried, for rendering support and deliverance the more illustrious; and to confound the more in the end, such as do oppose good men. <sup>e</sup> The hardest things yield to divine power.



*side.* And, behold, of a sudden, the angel of the *(l)* Lord came upon him, and a *splendid (m)* light from him shined in heart of the thick-walled prison : and he gently smote Peter on the side, and so raised him up out of his sleep, saying, at the same time to him, Arise up quickly. And, that same moment of time, his chains, as though they had heard his voice, instantly *(n)* fell off from his hands, without awaking his keepers. And the angel farther said unto him *(o)*, Gird thyself presently, by means of an under garment, and bind on thy *(p)* sandals for walking : and so he did. And he next saith unto him, Cast now thy upper *(q)* garment about thee, and follow me through the prison. And he, agreeable to order *(r)*, went out from the place of his confinement, and followed him who was sent ; and wist not, so strange and unexpected were the whole particulars *(s)*, that it was true indeed which was thus done by the angel of the Lord : but thought in himself, that hitherto he saw a mere prophetic vision. When they were past the first and second prison ward, both watched with soldiers, they came at length to the heavy iron gate that leadeth direct unto the capital city ; which<sup>f</sup> opened to them even as the rest had done *(t)* of his own accord : and they went out unmolested, and passed on together through one street of the city, and forthwith the angel, having executed his commission<sup>g</sup>, departed from him of a sudden. And, when Peter was fully come to himself, from late astonishment, he said, in his mind, Now I know of a *(u)*

*(l)* Comp. Matth. i. 30 & Pet. iii. 22. Luke ii. 9. *(m)* So chap. ix. 3. *(n)* The miracle was so much the more conspicuous, from the strength and skill with which Peter had been bound. *(o)* That is, tie up your clothes, comp. Jer. xiii. 1. *(p)* Or shoes. Though not proper to delay, he is not put into hurry and confusion, in xii. 8. *(q)* Or cloak. *(r)* All this time the keepers both within and without, were fast asleep. *(s)* See 2 Cor. xii. 2. 3. *(t)* Comp. Mark iv. 28. Lev. xxv. 5, 11. *(u)* Or in reality, comp. Isa. xxi.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>f</sup> What depends upon care and industry, must not thus expect supernatural interposition. <sup>g</sup> See note *(f)*.

surety, that the glorious Lord God hath sent from heaven his benevolent angel, and hath, for the present, delivered me out of the hand of cruel king Herod and from all that he did purpose, to gratify the expectation of the (x) like persecuting people of the Jews from different quarters of the land with himself. And, when he had considered the amazing thing, of his imminent danger and miraculous escape, he came to the (y) house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many saints were gathered together <sup>h</sup> praying (z) as above. And, as Peter knocked at the door of the (a) outer gate, which led through an area into the house (b), a damsel came, in secret prudent manner, to hearken, named (c) Rhoda. And when she well knew Peter's voice she opened not the gate for gladness and impatience together of communicating such good news to the <sup>i</sup> rest, but ran in towards the house, and told the pious worshippers there how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, *The thing is incredible, and thou art gone mad for certain.* But she constantly affirmed with marks of great earnestness, that it was even so as she had spoken. Then, allowing her some degree of credit, said they, in their confusion, one to another, *It is his guardian angel (d), or ministering spirit, come to speak for*

14. (x) See Psal xxvii 12, 32. Peter before hand, therefore, had no such hope. (y) She appears at this time, to have been a widow, from her husband not being named, comp. verse 25, chap. xiii. 5, 13. xv. 35 (z) See verse 5. (a) Comp. Judges xviii. 17. see verse 14. (b) Such houses Dr. Shaw has given us a description of in the east, see Acts x 17. Matth. xxvi. 7. (c) Or rose. So Susanna, signifies a lily. Hedesa, a myrtle. Tamar, a palm tree. All names of agreeable flowers, or plants. (d) See Mat. xviii. 10. Or simply,

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>h</sup> Clandestine and even nightly meetings, become not only lawful, but proper, in evil times. <sup>i</sup> We should make friends, as soon as possible, partakers of our joys. God doth mix mirth with sadness, and sadness with mirth, that we should not despair. He mercifully tends those that love him, by restraining the rage of his enemies, and providing for their safety. Earnestness of affection to the good, is

him, and who may therefore have assumed his form. But Peter continued knocking for admittance among the faithful: and when they had opened the door, and saw him verily, they were astonished at an event so wonderful, so unaccountable. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace<sup>(e)</sup>, under such natural transport for some few moments, declared unto them at large, how the Lord<sup>k</sup>, by his angel, had miraculously brought him out of the prison. And he said, after devoutly and jointly praising Almighty God for so great a benefit: Go, shew these things which have happened, unto our dear brother James the Less<sup>(f)</sup>, and to the other brethren in Christ<sup>l</sup>, whose pious concern on my account has met with such kind regard. And he departed some little while, and went into another more retired place of the city. Now, as soon as it was clear day, there was no small stir among the soldiers who had him under most immediate charge, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had diligently sought for him, and found him not, he examined the jail-keepers<sup>(g)</sup> as to what account they were able to give; and, supposing they had been guilty of connivance with the late prisoner, commanded, in his rash and cruel wrath, that they should forthwith be put to death<sup>(h)</sup>. And he, disappointed of his wicked views<sup>m</sup>, went down from Judea to Cesarea<sup>(i)</sup>, and there, for most part, abode.

messenger sent from him; as in Luke vii. 24. Matth. xi. 10. Rev. i. 20. <sup>(e)</sup> Comp. Luke xiii. 16. xix. 33. <sup>(f)</sup> He was one of great and just authority, even among the apostles. Son of Alphaeus, and who wrote the epistle, which to this day goeth under his name. <sup>(g)</sup> See chap. iv. 9. xxviii. 18. <sup>(h)</sup> It is like, he got not time to execute this; God seeing proper, that innocent people should not suffer, by saving of Peter. <sup>(i)</sup> See chap. viii. 40.

#### REFLECTIONS.

highly commendable. <sup>k</sup> Through the best of all instruments, we ought ever to look to him that is supreme. Angels themselves have no just claim to our worship. <sup>l</sup> By praising God we encourage others to trust and to do good. Signal deliverances engage to serve God with resolution and zeal. <sup>m</sup> The severest vengeance is in reserve for cruel tyrants, even where they look for most ease.

## SECT. LVIII. FROM VERSE XX.

AND Herod was highly displeased with them *who lived in the maritime cities of (a) Tyre and Sidon, on the account of some supposed affront : but they, apprehensive of danger, came with one accord to him by proper deputies<sup>a</sup> ; and having made Blastus, in particular, who was the king's chamberlain, and favourite at the time, their friend, earnestly desired peace, through his interest ; because their country, bordering upon Judea and Galilee, was nourished, in effect (b), by food and merchandize sent from the king's country. And upon a (c) solemn set day for suitable public festivity and rejoicings, Herod, arrayed in white royal apparel, woven with silver, which did strongly reflect the sun-beams, sat, in the theatre, upon his august throne, and from thence made an oration upon the subject of his own clemency, that was universally pleasing unto them. And the people, charmed with his appearance and address, by way of return, gave forth a joint shout of praise, saying, It is the voice of a god (d) for certain, and not that of a weak mortal man. And, because the thing displeased him not, but was heard with complacency though false and impious to a great degree<sup>b</sup>, imme-*

(a) In Phœnicia, near the bounds of his kingdom. Some think the cause of his severe displeasure might be receiving Peter among them. (b) Comp. 1 Kings v. 11. Ezek. xxvii. 17. Isa. xxiii. 18. (c) Josephus says, it was on the second day of the games, exhibited in honour of Claudius Cæsar, l. xix c. 7. (d) The Bath-col, Syriac, or the speech of God. This, from such of them as were Jews,

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> See Sect. LVII. Reflect. <sup>m</sup>. <sup>b</sup> They who are much taken with high swelling words of praise are guilty of impious treason, 2 Mac. ix. 9. Ignorance and zeal, without knowledge here, could yet be pled. Popular flattery would make gods of those who are not worthy of the name of man. The proud, the impious, and the persecutor are surest fittest objects of divine vengeance. God delays to punish, that by great and marvellous examples he may teach posterity, *Laſſan*. Let this be a lesson to all future ages, Psal. ix. 16. Behold in it the power

diately the (c) angel of the Lord smote him with grievous pains about the heart and bowels, because, instead of repressing and disavowing such shameful adulation, he gave not God the whole glory rather: and, soon after, he was eaten up of numerous small worms, and gave up the ghost in dismal agony. But, this great foe of truth and holiness being taken out of the way, the pure gospel word of God grew eminently successful, and multiplied both in the number and excellence of its professors. And Barnabas<sup>c</sup> and Saul returned (g) from executing their commission at Antioch to Jerusalem, when they had fully fulfilled their ministry (h) for relief, unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, and took with them John (i), whose surname was Mark.

## C H A P. XIII.

## SECT. LIX. FROM VERSE I.

**N**OW, there were in the *Christian* (a) church that was at Antioch, certain prophets, *who foretold*

was peculiarly impious. (e) Comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xix. 35. *Joseph Ant.* He died in the fifth day of his torment, see chap. x. 2, 6. xiv. 14, 15. (f) Comp. chap. vi. 7. xix. 2c. (g) Some M. S. S. give countenance to this very natural interpretation. (h) See chap. xi. 29, 30. Here the history of the apostles of the circumcision is very naturally dropped; for it doth not appear from the New Testament that they ever preached to idolatrous Gentiles; at least before the destruction of Jerusalem. (i) Comp. verse 12.

(a) See chap. xi. 27, &c. xv. 32. The history of Peter is very

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

of divine majesty! Knowledge of the true God renders impious pride the more aggravated; see note<sup>c</sup>. <sup>c</sup> The ties of interest and affection together, are strongly felt. How necessary is it to seek peace with the God of heaven? Deut. xxviii. 23. compared with this, the applauses of the multitude are often both vain and impious.

*future events, and (b) were eminent teachers of the doctrine of Jesus; such as the generous Levite (c) Barnabas, and Simeon that was called (d) Niger from his swarthy complexion, and (e) Lucius of Cyrene in Africa, and Manaen, <sup>a</sup> which had been brought up from his early years with Herod the (f) tetrarch (v), and Saul the once noted persecutor. As they publicly (h) ministered to the Lord Jesus, and fasted (i) in private, to aid their devotion, the Holy Ghost sent from him, by a strong distinct impulse, said, (j) Separate me out of your number, for a time, (k) Barnabas and (l) Saul <sup>b</sup> for the special extensive work of preaching among the Gentiles, whereunto I have now (m) called them. And when in a considerable body they had fasted and prayed for additional aids and re-*

properly dropped, as it does not appear that he ever preached to the idolatrous Gentiles. First, we have an account of the spreading of the gospel among the Jews only, Acts ii. chap. to chap. x. Then of the spreading of Christianity among the devout Gentiles, from chap. x. to xiii. Then among the idolatrous Gentiles, from chap. xiii. to the end. From the time of Malachy to John, no prophet had appeared. (b) Inferior to apostles, and perhaps even ordinary stated ministers, comp. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11: (c) See chap. xi. 22. &c. (d) Or black. (e) A Roman name; see chap. xi. 20. (f) To distinguish him from Herod the king; Matth. xiv. 10. Luke iii. 1. (g) See chap. ix. (h) Or officiated; Heb. x. 11. Rom. xv. 16. Syrian and Arabic say, prayed, Heb. xiii. 15. See Matth. vi. 16. xvii. 21. Acts xiv. 23. (i) See Mat. vi. 16. xvii. 21. Acts xiv. 23. (j) Comp. chap. x. 19. xx. 23. This sometimes applied to things which were not persons, Mat. xiii. 14. John vii. 38, 42. (k) See chap. iv. 36, 37. (l) See chap. ix. 15. xxii. 21. Before this they were familiarly united, chap. ix. 27. xi. 25. (m) Comp. verse 5.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> How different may those under a like education prove? <sup>b</sup> The Gentiles, by a special divine command, were now clearly to be called every where, Gal. ii. 8. Acts xxii. 21. Some understand this to have been communicated, 2 Cor. xii. 1, &c. A noble preparation truly for so much labour and trial. No sacrifice is more acceptable to God than setting forth the glory of Christ. His divine blessing is necessary to turn the greatest gifts and offices into profit. They who go out upon sacred work, ought to maintain a becoming regard to this, by means of frequent intense prayer.

marbable success, and laid (n) their hands on them, to signify their acquiescence in the celestial motion, they sent them away with every token of friendship, for execution of their high, arduous, and honourable office.

## SECT. LX. FROM VERSE IV.

SO they being thus sent forth by immediate direction of the (a) Holy Ghost, departed, under the same influence, unto (b) Seleucia, in the neighbourhood of Antioch; and from thence they sailed to the (c) island Cyprus. And when they were arrived there, at a city of the east side, named (d) Salamis, they preached the word of God, made known to them from Christ, in many of the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also (e) John Mark to be their minister both in bodily and spiritual things. And when they had gone from this westwards through other parts of the isle, so far as unto (f) Paphos, they found a certain magical forcerer, a false teaching (g) prophet, and a Jew at the same time by profession, whose name was (h) Bar-Jesus; which was then with the Roman (i) deputy of the country (j), Sergius Paulus (k), a judicious prudent man; who, from the fame of what they taught, called, by his servants, for Barnabas and Saul, and earnestly desired<sup>a</sup> to hear from them, what

(n) See chap. vi. 6. xiv. 26. (o) Comp. Matth. xiv. 13, 22, 23.

(a) See verse 2. (b) Named from Seleucus the builder. An Asiatic city, in the province of Mesopotamia, or Diarbar. (c) In the Mediterranean, and nigh to Syria; see chap. iv. 36. (d) Now called Pamaugusta. (e) See chap. xii. 25. Luke iv. 20. (f) Where was the Paphian Venus, or Cyprian queen, most basely and idolatrously worshipped, in a splendid temple. (g) Like as chap. viii. 9, 11. (h) Either son of Jesus, or son of salvation, comp. Matth. xvi. 17. Mark x. 46. (i) Or proconsul. A Roman magistrate, who governed a province belonging to the empire, with consular power. (j) A celebrated Roman name. (k) Signifying little.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Barnabas was one of singular softness, as Saul was of zeal and warmth; making a proper mixture for so great and extraordinary an undertaking: an undoubted honour this to the

*they chose to denominate the true word of God. But Elymas (l) the forcerer (for so is his current name by interpretation) withstood them ministers of heaven, seeking, by his utmost artful endeavours, to turn away the deputy from all sort of regard to the pure Christian<sup>b</sup> faith. Then (m) Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with an extraordinary measure of the (n) Holy Ghost, set his eyes steadfastly on him (o), and said, O thou full of all hazardous subtilty, and thereby prompt to all manner of mischief, thou very child (p) of the devil, from habit and inclination to imitate him<sup>c</sup>; thou stubborn enemy of all righteousness! Wilt thou not yet cease to pervert the (q) right ways of truth, from the Lord supreme? And now (r), to punish thy wilful horrible guilt in part, and so as to warn others, behold, the strong (s) hand of the Lord Jesus is upon thee<sup>d</sup>; and thou shalt be suddenly blind, not seeing the clearest sun-shine light itself for a season. And immediately there fell on him a*

(l) Some, an Arabic word for wise, as magus the Persian word. Others, from the Hebrew word helyma, healer. (m) A Hebrew, as the other is a Roman name, and his most common one with the Gentiles. (n) Comp. chap. iv. 8. vii. 55. A divine fortitude. (o) Comp. chap. iii. 12, 6, 15. (p) See John viii. 41, 44. comp. Acts xviii. 14. (q) Comp. Hos. xiv. 9. Acts vii. 51. (r) Therefore, as in chap. x. 5 (s) Comp. Ruth i. 13.

#### REFLECTIONS.

divine wisdom! There is no place for craft, among those who have once learned the sure and steadfast truth. The most solid and important prudence, is to inquire impartially after gospel evidence, and be governed by it. <sup>b</sup> Even the best messengers of the gospel, may lay their account to be opposed. <sup>c</sup> To obstruct the progress of divine truth, is peculiarly Satanish, 1 Cor. iv. 4. and leads to destructive wandering, Mat. xv. 14. It is an extreme baseness, to prefer our own vain glory and filthy lucre, to the eternal welfare of others. They are not worthy to see the light, who wage open war against that of the gospel. <sup>d</sup> It is not meet to rail from mere human passion, or upon uncertain evidence. A prophetic knowledge and character will justify an use of strong terms. Indignant grief must spring from clear indubitable signs of perversion. Christ the heavenly Lord, is superior to all principalities and powers of



mist and a darkness (*t*) *truly tremendous*; and he, *whose seduction had so long and greatly misled others*, went about under deep horror, seeking some to take hold of and lead him by the hand (*u*). Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, *by the servants of Jesus, to punish base magical opposition to divine truth*, firmly believed the gospel, being astonished afterwards <sup>c</sup> at the entire admirable doctrine of the Lord.

## SECT. LXI. FROM VERSE XIII.

NOW, when Paul and his company *on ship board* loosed from Paphos, they came to (*a*) Perga in the country of Pamphylia (*b*): and John, *for certain reasons*, departing from them, returned to his mother at (*c*) Jerusalem. But when they departed *after that* from Perga they came to (*d*) Antioch, a considerable city in the district of Pisidia, and went into the Jewish synagogue on the (*e*) Sabbath-day, and sat down in some conspicuous place both for hearing, and, if need were, to speak from thence likewise. And after the customary reading such part of the law, and of the (*f*) prophets which fell in course, the rulers of the synagogue, (*g*) *whose*

(*t*) See Gen. xix. xi. 2 Sam. vi. 18. (*u*) Comp. chap. ix. 8.

(*a*) A city, says Pomponius Mela famous for a temple of Diana. (*b*) The ancient name of a province in Lesser Asia, lying near the Mediterranean coast, between the provinces of Lykia and Cilicia, now a part of Carmania. (*c*) Perhaps he chose to give up with so great a labour, and danger, see chap. xv. 38. (*d*) To distinguish it from that in Syria, chap. xii.—xiii. 1. Built in memory of the same Antioch, by Seleucus his son. (*e*) Greek Sabbaths, as in Matth. xii. 1. xxviii. 1. (*f*) By a proper division, the whole in one year, were read, chap. xvii. 12. (*g*) Comp. Luke iv. 15, 17. Perhaps the apostles might ask this privilege. Any

## REFLECTIONS.

darkness. <sup>c</sup> Bishops, pastors, or elders, are to study and preach the word, by reading, expounding, sermonizing and catechizing, Deut. xxxi. 9, 12. Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 15, 27. 1 Thess. v. 27. Heb. v. 12. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. Matth. xxviii. 19.

*right it was, sent a message unto them, saying <sup>a</sup>, by their officer, Ye men and brethren, who appear by your situation not averse, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people ere they dismiss, say on now and welcome. (b) Then Paul stood up as one who had not a common title like those who stately (i) sat and taught, and beckoning with his hand (j) to procure attention, said thus, Men of Israel by descent and belief, and all ye <sup>b</sup> of Gentile extract that now do happily fear (k) the living and true God, give patient audience for a little to my words. The God of this people of Israel whom you meet here to worship and to be instructed by out of his law, chose our eminent ancient fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be his peculiar servants and friends, and exalted the (l) people who sprung from them to signal honours by means of (m) Joseph, even when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an exceeding (n) high arm of power <sup>c</sup> brought he them afterwards out of it, where at that time they were cruelly and ungratefully used. And about the time of forty*

one, says the Talmud and Maimonides, might make a speech after public worship was over. (t) Comp. chap. iv. 36 (i) See Luke iv. 20. (j) See chap. xii. 17 (k) Probably Jewish proselytes, comp. chap. x. 2. xiii. 43 (l) A metaphor from bringing edifies to their perfection in height, comp. Psalm ix. 13 (m) The kindness of heaven, till Messiah came, are enumerated by wife conciliating degrees (n) The metaphor is taken from men. when they lift up their arm for a great stroke, comp. Ex. vi. 6 Job. xl. 4.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> A promiscuous freedom of speaking in public is far from being orderly or useful. <sup>b</sup> They do well who secure good will by proper means, when they begin to preach. The Jews, by temporal mercies, were prepared for others of a much more important nature. An acquaintance with scripture, is the highest part of literature. A filial reverence for the divine being, is the governing principle of all religion. <sup>c</sup> God did plead for the injured cause of the Jews, by most astonishing miracles, comp. Deut. i. 13. Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 8. Here we have a noble evidence of scripture genuineness and authority, which, by their public reading in Christian solemnities should be trans-

years suffered he their *provoking evil* (o) manners in the <sup>d</sup> wilderness *betwixt Egypt and the promised land*. And when, at length, he had destroyed for their sakes, *no less than seven mighty* (p) *idolatrous nations in the land of Chanaan, he* (q) *divided their whole land to them by lot*. And after that *long period of their history*, he gave unto them a *series of judges for government both in peace and war*, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet, *who was the last of that order*. And afterward, *to be ruled and defended like other encompassing nations*, they desired a king (r), *in place of a republic*: and, (s) *to gratify their importunity*, he gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of (t) Benjamin by the space of *nigh forty years*. And when he had *most justly* removed him (u), *on account of his disobedience*, he raised up unto them David, *from* (x) *low outward estate, and from the tribe of Judah*, to be their king: to whom also he gave *honourable testimony in his word* (y), and said, I have found my *servant* David the son of Jesse, a man for (z) *rule after mine own<sup>e</sup> heart, which, in the duties of that high office and very different from his predecessor* (a), shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's (b) seed hath Almighty God, according to his *gracious promise*, raised unto the people of Israel *first*, a *most illustrious Saviour, from the greatest*

Luke i. 51. (o) Comp. Deut. i. 31. Psalm xc. 10. (p) These were the descendants of Canaan, the grand child of Cham, see Ex. iii. 8, 17. Judges iii. 5. Hittites, Amonites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Gibeonites. (q) Joshua the successor of Moses, with Eleazar High Priest, were his instruments; Josh. xiii. 7. xiv. 1, &c. (r) See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 19. (s) Comp. 1 Sam. ix. 15, 16. x. 1. (t) And not of Judah. Gen. xlix. 10. see 1 Sam. xi. 7. (u) Comp. 1 Sam. xiii. 1. xv. 26. 28. (x) See Psalm cxiii. 7, 8. lxxxix. 20, 21. (y) 1 Sam. 13, 14. (z) Or agreeable to me. (a) Comp. Psal. lxxviii. 72. Or, to perform all that I would have done. (b) See Acts ii. 30. Isa. xi. 1, &c. comp. Acts iii. 22. Psal.

## REFLECTIONS.

mitted. <sup>d</sup> See last note. <sup>e</sup> Like David, may we be solicitous to serve our generation according to the will of God, Zech. xii. 8. waiting in a way of usefulness, our summons to fall

*of all miseries, even (c) Jesus; when John (d), as was likewise foretold, had first preached, immediately before his personal coming, the baptism of (e) repentance and pardon to all the people of Israel. And as John had fulfilled his course (f) of sacred office, and not long before his death, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I declare in the most explicit and public manner, that I am not he, so generally and justly expected to be the (g) Saviour of Israel. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose very (h) shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren (i), children of the stock of Abraham that eminent friend of the Almighty, and whosoever among you now feareth (j) him who is God alone, though not lineally descended from that illustrious head, to each of you is the word of this great everlasting salvation sent (k), first by Jesus Christ, and next by his immediate apostolical servants. For you ought to know, and seriously to lay to heart, how they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers instigating the common people, because they knew him not as they might and should have done, nor yet properly understood the voices of the prophets, which are publicly read (l) in your synagogues, every Sabbath-day<sup>f</sup>, they have, without designing any such thing (m), fulfilled them in condemning him to a cruel ignominious death. And though they found no just cause of death in him, nor indeed any crime, yet desired they (n) Pilate, with the utmost importunity, their Roman governor, that he should be slain as a vile malefactor. And when they had thus fulfilled all that was written of him, with regard to his*

lxxxix. 3, 4. (c) See chap. v. 31. Matth. i. 21. (d) Mal. iii. 1. Matth. iii. 1. (e) The outward sign was an emblem of both, comp. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. (f) See Col. iv. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 7. (g) Or Messiah, so John i. 21, 27. (h) I am not worthy to be his low mental servant. (i) Friendly and honourable appellations, to win upon their affections. (j) See verse xvi. 43. (k) Comp. Matth. x. 6. Acts iii. 25. (l) Comp. verse 15 chap. iii. 17. (m) See Luke xxiv. 20, 27, 44. Acts iii. 18. (n) See Matth. xxvii.

#### REFLECTIONS.

asleep. <sup>f</sup> Frequent and good means of knowledge, render ig-

*last awful sufferings, they, of some humanity and candour at that time, took him down (o) by permission from the accursed tree, and laid him in a new sepulchre. But God, contrary to the will of all his watchful enemies, raised him from the dead (p) as had been often foretold, on the third day<sup>s</sup>: and, from thence forward, he was seen (q) many different days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem for close attendance, who are his willing and steadfast witnesses unto the Jewish people themselves (r) wherever they go. And we, like our other apostolical brethren, declare<sup>h</sup> explicitly, in the face of numerous great difficulties, unto you, at present, those glad tidings of spiritual good; and, how that the promise which was made, again and again unto the (s) fathers of our nation, God hath most distinctly and particularly fulfilled the same unto us their children (t) by descent, in that he hath raised up (u) Jesus again from the dead; as it is also written among other passages in the (x) second Psalm, Thou art my specially beloved Son, this day of thy singular preferment, have (y) I begotten thee from trouble and death to triumph over enemies and reign gloriously. And as (z) concerning that he raised him up from the dead, to possess singular and every way peculiar honours (a), now no more therefore to return to the place of corruption, he said also, by his prophet Isaiah (b),*

26. 21. John xix. 6 Acts iii. 13, &c. (o) See John xix. 38, 39. (p) Comp. chap. ii. 24. 32. v. 30. (q) No less than forty. (r) The most severe threats and sufferings are not sufficient to deter them, comp. Acts i. 3. ii. 32 x. 40, 41. (s) As in Gen xxii. 18. xlix. 10. Isa xi. 1. (t) Posterity or offspring. (u) See verse 34. (x) Verse 7th, comp. Psal lxxxix. 27. 28. (y) See Rom. i. 4. and comp. 2 Sam. v. 12. Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Col i. 18. Rev. i. 5. The anointing day of kings, was sometimes styled their birth day, Mat. xxviii. 18 Acts ii. 27 (z) Or because. (a) A very different resurrection this, from Rom. vi. 9 comp. Rev. i. 18. (b) Chap. lv. 3. Some, I will give you the sacred things of David, even thy

## REFLECTIONS.

norance the more criminal. <sup>s</sup> The resurrection sufficiently answers all that can be objected to our divine Saviour's death.

<sup>h</sup> They who believe the resurrection must be the friends of

on this wise, I will give you the sure *everlasting* mercies<sup>1</sup> *promised of old to king* (c) David. Wherefore he, *the royal prophet himself*, saith *also*, in another remarkable (d) psalm, *as unto God Most High*, Thou shalt not suffer (e) thine holy One *even to see corruption, while lying in the grave.* For, *to evince whom he meant, consider that David, the speaker of these words*, after he had served his own (f) generation, by governing (g) agreeable to the will of God, fell on sleep (h) *like every other good person*, and was laid unto the dust of his fathers, and there (i) *for certain* saw corruption with them. But he whom God raised again saw no corruption *either more or less.*

### SECT. LXII. FROM VERSE XXXVIII.

BE it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man *Jesus Christ, once dead and now gloriously exalted*, is preached (a) unto one and all of you the forgiveness of sins *which are past with deliverance from punishment*: and by him all that believe, (b) *so as to become penitent*, are (c) *thus freely* justified from all things *even the most grievous*, from which ye could not possibly be justified (d) by the law of <sup>a</sup> Moses.

faithful. (c) Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 13. (d) Viz. the 16th, and verse 10th. (e) The Messiah, or anointed prophet, priest, and king, comp. chap. ii. 27. (f) Or age, in which he lived. (g) Or by ministering to the purpose of God. (h) Or died. (i) Or, became putrified. In him, therefore, the prediction could not be verified, but in one resembling him.

(a) Or proclaimed. see chap. x. 41. (b) See Heb. ix. 9. x. 1. &c. (c) See Gal. ii. 16. Heb. xii. 14. (d) A law term for absolution,

### REFLECTIONS.

Christ, and no other could be witnesses. <sup>1</sup> Christ by his resurrection, seemed to be born out of the earth anew, Rom. i. 4. Heb. i. 6. The glories and victories of David, were but a faint shadow of the Messiah's, comp. Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. Let those who must see corruption, rejoice to think, of being delivered by Christ, Hos. xiii. 14. For ever adored be his glorious name! most thankfully accepted be his overflowing grace!

<sup>a</sup> The law could only pardon some sins, and it reached not

(e) Beware therefore, lest you despise so great benefits as have now been set forth, and that come upon you; which is spoken of in the volume of smaller (f) prophets: Behold, ye scoffing despisers, and wonder to be overtaken in wrath, and perish without remedy: for I am about to work a most amazing work in your days, even a work<sup>b</sup> of judgement, which, it is to be feared, most of you shall in no wise believe the certified truth of, though a man, with ever so great earnestness and evidence, declare it unto you (g). And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles who had become (h) converts to the faith of one only living and true God, besought Paul and Barnabas earnestly that these and what similar words they yet had relative to the Messiah, might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now, when the congregation for divine worship was broken (i) up for this time, many of the Jews and religious profelytes (j) to their doctrine, followed Paul and Barnabas home, under saving conviction; who, then, and afterwards through the week, speaking to them more clearly and largely than even before, persuaded them, by strong arguments, to continue steadfast in the pure faith, profession, and obedience of the rich (k) grace of God by Christ.

Prov. xvii. 15. Matth. xi. 19. Necessary to be followed by obedience, Gal. v. 6. James ii. 14, &c. Luke xxiv. 47. (e) Comp. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. viii. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. (f) Comp. Hab. i. 5. Here applied from men's temporal, to their eternal state, Heb. ii. 2, &c. Isa. xxviii. 14. (g) Matth. xxiv. 31. (h) See verse xvi. 26. (i) or finished. (j) Comp. Mat. xxiii. 15. Acts ii. 10. (k) See John i. 17. Rom. vi. 14, 15. The cause, by a metonymy put for the effect; or the favour and goodness of God manifested in the gospel, comp. Rom. iv. 14, 15. Acts xiv. 3. Gal. v. 4. Tit. ii. 11.

## REFLECTIONS.

to all nations. This required no small degree of resolution and confidence. Now was remarkably fulfilled that part of the beautiful parable, Luke xv. 25. comp. Gal. ii. 16. <sup>b</sup> The severest measures of wrath are due to ingratitude; against which, all kind offers made by the servants of God, will rise up in judgement.

## SECT. LXIII. FROM VERSE XLIV.

AND the next Sabbath-day, *from various favourable reports*, came almost the whole *people of that city* (a), *Antioch in Pisidia*, together, *with earnest desire* to hear the *gospel* (b) word of God *preached*. But when the *unbelieving Jews* saw the *vast multitudes of others, who went on that design*, they were filled with *bitter* (c) envy, and spake in *rage* against those things which were spoken by Paul of *Jesus, so lately crucified, as Messiah, abusively* (d) contradicting the *apostles* and even (e) blaspheming *their divine truths, when they should*<sup>a</sup> *have calmly argued*. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed *the more bold*,<sup>b</sup> and said unto their *adversaries*, It was necessary, *in compliance with divine order*, that the word of God, *relative to his most dear Son*, should first have been spoken to you, *the descendents* (f) of *Abraham*<sup>c</sup>; but seeing ye put it *so contemptuously* from you, and (g) *thereby, in effect*, judge yourselves unworthy of *that precious gift of everlasting life through him*, lo, we turn with our *affectionate addresses*<sup>d</sup> *henceforth, to the uncircumcised* (h) *Gentiles*: for so hath the Lord *Jehovah himself* com-

(a) See verse 14th. (b) Or method of obtaining eternal life through Christ. (c) Or zeal for their old opinions. (d) Comp. 1 Sam. vi. 12. (e) Defaming, or railing. (f) Comp. Luke xxiv. 47. Mat. x. 24. (g) Similar to Prov. viii. 36. Phil. iii. 19. The mind and intention, is denominated from facts. (h) Comp. chap.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> It is the manner of furious opposers to attempt overthrowing, by false insinuation and confident abuse. <sup>b</sup> When numbers crowd to attend upon gospel teaching, ministers ought from thence to encourage themselves! Rom. x. 17. The author of the gospel will not vary the terms of acceptance sealed in his blood. Pious fortitude is the result of extraordinary assistance; Acts v. 29, &c. xxviii. 31, &c. ix. 25, 29, 30. 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c. <sup>c</sup> The wicked furnish out matter of condemnation from their own guilt, though they do not pass actual sentence against themselves. <sup>d</sup> Ingratitude to heaven is a crime of the utmost hazard, 2 Theff. ii. 10, &c. Precious time, must not always be



manded (i) us, saying, *so far back as in the book of Isaiah's prophecies* : I have set thee, *my prince Messiah*, to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest, *by means of instructing and converting them*<sup>c</sup>, be for complete eternal salvation unto the (j) *remote* ends of the whole earth. And when the Gentiles *by nature*, heard of this welcome into covenant with God, from the apostles' mouth, they were glad to a great degree, and glorified, in sweet praise of obedience, the word of the Lord which had so invited them : and as <sup>e</sup> many as were ordained (k), *through a suitable disposition*, to inherit eternal life believed the gospel report. And the word of the Lord, *by their joint affectionate labours*, was published with remarkable success<sup>g</sup> throughout all the region (l) of Pisidia and Pamphilia. But the unbelieving passionate Jews stirred up the late devout converts<sup>h</sup>, and honourable (m) women of their own profession, and also the chief leading men of

xxviii. 28. 1 Tim. i. 19. (i) See Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8. Paul's own commission was a very peculiar one, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Gal. i. 16. Luke ii. 32. Rom. xi. 17. Eph. ii. 14, &c. (j) Or extreme parts, Isa. xlix. 9. (k) Even all who were uprightly desirous to become happy, by Christian faith and virtue, Acts x. 13. A military term, for regularly drawing up, or setting in order an army. Observe the antithesis here to persons mentioned, verse 46. So the Syriac, and other most ancient versions, comp. Rom. x. 3 1 Pet. v. 5. Luke ix. 62. Men are said to do, what they are moved to by the grace of God. (l) See verse xiii. 14. (m) From station or

## REFLECTIONS.

lost in fruitless attempts. <sup>d</sup> Some do thankfully accept what others most ungratefully reject and despise. <sup>e</sup> Sincere love for truth, accompanied with diligent search, disposes, or ordains to eternal life; see Luke ix. 62. James iv. 10. 1 Pet 5, 6. Such are the very reverse of those in Acts xiii. 46. God is always disposed to assist the upright diligent, but he does not compel. Here zeal is tempered by wisdom, and animated with pure tender love. <sup>f</sup> Opposition of adversaries serves often to enlarge the boundaries of religious truth and virtue, Psal. cx. 2. Young proselytes, and more especially female ones, are apt to be peculiarly zealous. <sup>h</sup> Even devout women are soonest deceived under pretence of Godliness. Malice first moveth minds against sincere preachers, and afterwards breaketh out

the city *Antioch*<sup>i</sup>, and raised *an exceeding hot* persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them soon after, *by their interest with the heathen magistracy, like so many hideous pests* (n), out of their coasts. But, *as the spirit of mischief in those people did pursue from their boundaries, they, who served Christ meekly, shook off the dust of their feet to witness against them* (o), agreeable to order, and came unto Iconicum, *a famous neighbouring city of Lycaonia, situated on Mount Taurus.* And both the apostolical disciples (p), and their numerous converts, were filled with pure spiritual joy from the gospel knowledge, and hope of an endless reward to compensate present suffering, and with the (q) supernatural supports likewise of the <sup>k</sup> Holy Ghost.

wealth, see Mark xv. 43. vi. 21. (n) Or districts. (o) See Mat. x. 14. Acts xviii. 6 (p) See verse 43, 48. (q) Comp. chap. iv. 8. vii. 55. Or divine zeal.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Into words of reproach. <sup>i</sup> When keen opposers of truth, in place of arguments have recourse to evil arts and violence. Simplicity, superstition, and zeal without knowledge, are the instruments made use of by false and cruel men. <sup>k</sup> Ardour of mind, confidence in danger, alacrity in holiness, are chief fruits of the Holy Spirit. The gospel dispensation is highly to be applauded for its benevolence and extensive charity. Amidst much incredulity, faithful ministers of the gospel are supported by those who have conquered prejudice, though fewer in number. What God designed for the good of all, let us daily and ardently pray for the success of, Luke i. 78. They who are unconcerned about this, have much reason to fear their own state. When the messengers of Christ are cast out of one place, they appear with renewed zeal in another. The graces of new converts, are a growing evidence for Christianity.

## C H A P. XIV.

## SECT. LXIV. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND, *soon after their arrival*, it came to pass (a) in Iconium, that they went both together into the (b) synagogue of the Jews, and so spake *the doctrine of the gospel*, that a great multitude, both of the Jews ~~themselves~~, and also of the *formerly idolatrous* Greeks, believed, *after close attention to their earnest and sound reasoning*. But the unbelieving *disobedient* Jews, *whom so much success did provoke*, stirred up the Gentiles *there to exasperation, who were still given to lying vanities*, and made their minds evil-affected (c), *like their own*, against the *Christian*<sup>a</sup> brethren. Long (d) time, therefore, *being animated with divine protection amidst various great hazards and troubles*, abode they here, speaking boldly in the (e) name of the blessed Lord Jesus, which gave his testimony *through them* unto the word of his gospel (f) grace, and granted *divers mighty* (g) signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of *those who lived in the city* was divided into *opposite sentiments*: and part held with the unbelieving Jews, and part with the *zealous* (b) apostles, Paul and Barnabas. And when there was an assault made *with extreme violence*, both of the *inimical* Gentiles, and also of

(a) See 2 Tim. ii. 10, 11. The capital of Carimania, in the Lesser Asia, 100 miles north of the Mediterranean sea, now called Goyni: being the seat of the Turkish vic-roy. (b) Under a wife and joint zeal, like as in chap. i. 13. ii. 44. (c) With desire to hurt, chap. xviii. 10. vii. 6, 19. Their minds and wills were both evil. (d) Thought to be about a year. (e) Comp. chap. ix. 27. iv. 17, 40. (f) Or gracious word. That of pardon and eternal life, to sincere penitents, Acts xv. 8. xviii. 27. (g) Comp. Mark xvi. 20. Heb. ii. 4. (b) See verse 14. John vii. 43.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> Christians have one spiritual father, to whom they have access by one Mediator, and therefore become bound to embrace one another with mutual brotherly affection. The evan-

the *confederated* Jews, with their (i) *malicious* rulers <sup>b</sup>, to use them despitefully, *who not only were innocent, but of great service to the inhabitants, and, if possible, to stone them after a mobbish manner, to death*; they were prudently ware of it, and fled (j) *as directed by the rulers of their religion, unto Lystra and Derbe, other cities of (k) Lycaonia, and unto the region of Cappadocia and Galatia that lieth immediately round about these* <sup>c</sup>: and there, *with diligence and success still, they preached the gospel to such as would attend them.*

#### SECT. LXV. FROM VERSE VIII.

AND there sat, *in some public place*, a certain man at Lystra, *quite (a) impotent in his feet, being a well known cripple from his mother's womb* <sup>a</sup>, who, *till then never (b) had walked a step*: the same heard Paul speak, *with an earnest attention*; who steadfastly beholding him *thus anxious to be enlightened, from the ardour and humility expressed in his looks*, and perceiving that he had faith in the power of God by Christ, sufficient to be (c) healed, said *authoritatively, with a loud (d) voice, while he pointed to the person under affliction, Stand upright on thy feet, thou most pitiable object.* And he not only stood up, but instantly leaped with transport, and

(i) Comp. chap. xiii. 50. i Thess ii. 2. (j) See Matth. x. 23.

(k) The ancient name of a province in Lesser Asia.

(a) Like as in chap iii. 4. (b) Diseases which increase from the womb, are the most incurable of any, see Matth. xix. 12. Acts iii. 7. (c) This he might do from words, gestures, or inspiration, Mat. ix. 28. (d) To make the miracle known. The name of his

#### REFLECTIONS.

gelical arms were sound doctrine and miracles. <sup>b</sup> Some are not content to perish themselves, unless they draw many with them. <sup>c</sup> God often bringeth this good out of evil, to spread the gospel by the persecution raised against it. The presence of Christ is our hope and our joy, and what the faithful in office may depend upon.

<sup>a</sup> Infinite wisdom governs what is most mysterious, or ap-

walked *firm*. And, when the people saw what *great, instantaneous, and unexpected miracle* Paul had done by a word, they, under *rapturous astonishment*, lifted up their voices *together*, saying (e), in the speech of Lycaonia: For certain the gods, whom we worship, are (f) come down, as we have heard they do sometimes, thus graciously to visit us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, on account of his age, grave sweet manner, and majestic look (g), Jupiter, and Paul (h) Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the officiating priest of Jupiter for the time, which was in the temple of that supposed tutelar deity before their city, brought (i) oxen and garlands of flowers for (j) ornamenting them, unto the gates which led to where they taught, and would have done immediate grateful sacrifice to them<sup>b</sup> with consent of all the people. Which when the apostles (k), Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they, in token of their grief, indignation, and abhorrence (l), rent their clothes, as unable to bear the mention of such a thing, and ran in<sup>c</sup> among the much mistaken people who led on the procession, to prevent their designed idolatry, crying out with ardour, and saying, Sirs, why do ye attempt these absurd abomi-

master, he would certainly use, as in chap. iii. 6. ix. 34. (e) Or language, most probably a dialect of the Greek. (f) Such visits in human form, were believed among them; and that statues and images were their usual residences. (g) Their supreme deity. (h) Considered by them, as the God of wisdom and eloquence, and messenger to all the rest. (i) The chief of their creatures, for the chief of their deities. (j) These were symbols of perfection and glory. (k) Only applicable to Barnabas in a secondary sense, as one sent, chap. xiii. 2. (l) See Matth. xxvi. 65. Or

#### REFLECTIONS.

parently accidental. <sup>b</sup> The weak multitude, from one extreme are easily carried to another. The darkness of ignorance and superstition abuses even that which is good to evil purposes. <sup>c</sup> It is natural and proper, to turn away with abhorrence from impious or indecent objects; *Dion. Bishop of Alex.* How unlike was this bold conduct of the apostles, amongst ignorant bigoted crowds with priests at their heads, to the Heathen conforming philosophers. Testimony is the more credible

*n*able things? We are by no means what you suspect, (*m*) but also are men of like natural (*n*) passions and infirmities with you who hear us, and preach by positive divine command unto you that ye should turn from these (*o*) idol-vanities unto the living God, who is the fountain of all being and happiness, and which, in particular, made (*p*), by his glorious power, heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are contained therein: who in (*q*) generations and times past suffered all heathen nations, because of their neglect and criminal abuse of reason (*r*), to walk in their own vicious ways. Nevertheless<sup>d</sup>, though

cloaks. (*m*) See verse 11. (*n*) Who need meat and drink, and who are subject to diseases, afflictions, and death, James v. 17. (*o*) Without life, strength, usefulness, 1 Sam. xii. 21. xv. 23. Isa. lxvi. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 4. 1 Thess. i. 9. (*p*) The heathen deities who had their beginning since that time, never could, Jer. x. 11. Acts iv. 24. (*q*) Comp. chap. xiii. 36. (*r*) He neither gave them

#### REFLECTIONS.

when borne in the midst of many dangers. <sup>d</sup> Before Christ can be taught, the principles of natural religion ought to be known. The idea of God, imports in it that of perfection, possessing every thing in himself that is good, and the fountain of this to others. By the benefit of creation, God acquires right to sole worship, Rev. iv. 10. xiv. 7. The more people are indebted to him, the more they are bound to honour him. From the structure of the visible world, the inference ought to be, that it is governed by one Almighty and All-wise being, who rules the world, and thus acts without suffering any thing from it. There is nothing we meet with more frequently and constantly in nature, than the traces of such an All-governing deity. God is what is chief, and most excellent in every kind. A manifest contrivance, immediately suggests a contriver. It strikes us like a sensation. Unity of design not only shews him to be one, but that he is equally active and present every where; the excellent disposition of things in order to obtain the best ends, and their beauty together, suggest his consummate wisdom; their regular rapid motions, his almighty power; the usefulness of the whole, his unbounded goodness: such arguments sufficiently open to the views and capacities of the unlearned, acquire strength and lustre from the discoveries of the learned. In our present state, we know enough to be satisfied of our de-

*he did not supernaturally reveal his perfections and will to others as to his chosen people, he left not himself to any of them (s) without witness for these sufficient, in that he did good to all (t); and gave us, in common with them, rain from heaven to mollify the ground, and fruitful seasons for sowing, ripening, and gathering in, filling our hearts (u) thereby with plenty of wholesome pleasant food and regular calls from thence to pious (x) gladness. And even with these so clear and weighty sayings, scarce restrained they the ignorant people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them as unto gods.*

## SECT. LXVI. FROM VERSE XIX.

AND there came *secretly* thither (a), *out of pure malignity of spirit*, certain Jews from Antioch of (b) *Pisidia*,

written laws, nor prophets; comp. Psal. lxxxi. 13. (s) Or void of testimonies. (t) Comp. Rom. i. 19, &c Psal. xix. 1, &c Matth. v. 45. (u) The same with us above. (x) Comp. Psal. cxlviii. 19, 2. Eph. iv. 18.

(a) See chap. xiii. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 2. (b) Comp. verse 2,

## REFLECTIONS.

pendance, and of the duty we owe unto him, the Lord and disposer of all things. His essence, and indeed that of all other substances, is beyond the reach of all our discoveries; but his attributes, as above set forth, clearly appear in his admirable works. God ceases not to provoke to what is good, by his love and continual benefits. Him we Christians serve, and to him we put up our supplications for all men, day and night; and especially for those in authority. *Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage*. By frequent friendly presents, he doth remind us of his affection; and so speak in sensible language to the heart, comp. Jer. xiv 22. To fix on the instruments, in place of the original author, is an error to which human nature has been too incident throughout all ages. A mixture of piety even amidst superstition, has something pleasant in it, whilst it moves our pity. Ought not God made manifest in the flesh, then, to be much more generally received than he is? Our rejoicing vigour ought regularly to be devoted to divine service. If we could hear the world itself speak, we would hear no other voice than this, *God made me. Plotinus*. He engraves himself deep upon the human mind, who ceases not to do them good.

and Iconium, who, *disbelieving themselves*, persuaded the *fickle people*, by *false accusations and reproachful names*, to treat them with violence; and having stoned (c) Paul, whose freedoms of speech against idolatry had rendered him most obnoxious <sup>a</sup>, they tumultuously drew him out of the city, supposing, from the number of cuts and bruises upon his body, that he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples whom he had made to the true faith, stood round about him to see, when their enemies were gone, if any signs of life might yet appear (d), or if it was proper to bury his dead body, he rose up, through divine goodness, like one in perfect health, and came back into the city: and the very next day (e) he departed with his fellow-worker, Barnabas, to Derbe of Lycaonia on the borders of Cappadocia. And when, as faithful men to their high and difficult office, they had preached the gospel to the inhabitants of that large populous city, and had taught many (f) of them with success, they returned again, first to Lystra <sup>b</sup>, and then to Iconium, and from thence to Antioch, confirming the souls of the late converted disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the (g) obedience of pure Christian faith, and that they should, in place of a happy temporal life, expect that both we who instruct, and you who obediently hear, must through much tribu-

4, &c. (c) See 1 Cor. xi. 25. (d) Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 16, 11. 2 Cor. xi. 23. (e) A complete evidence of his recovery, and of somewhat miraculous. (f) Comp. Matth. xxviii. 19. At this time he seems to have begun his acquaintance with young hopeful Timothy, comp. Acts xvi. 1, 2, 4 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. (g) Similar

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The crimes which sincere converts once approved, and assisted in, they are led to an abhorrence of, see chap. vii. 58. Good men, and especially ministers, though much afflicted in the way of their duty must not cease, see verse v. 19. chap. xiii. 14, 50. How apt is man's fortune to be suddenly changed? The more successful people are in preaching truth, the more do they enrage its enemies. Who would value themselves upon the applauses of a changeable multitude; who in a few days, can first sacrifice, and then murder? <sup>b</sup> Holy men scatter



lation (b), after the example of our leader on, enter into<sup>c</sup> the final possession of the kingdom of God. And when, (i) after a proper choice, they had ordained teaching (j) elders<sup>d</sup> in every church of their former planting, and had earnestly prayed with fasting that they might not labour in vain, they commended them in joint solemn manner to the guidance and protection of the blessed Lord Jesus, on whom they believed. And, after they had passed throughout the province of Pisidia (k), they came again to (l) Pamphylia; and when they had preached the word of Christ in Perga, a city of that last named country, they went down into the maritime city (m) Attalia, bordering upon Lycia; and thence sailed to Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for executing (n) the work which they had now so vigorously fulfilled. And when they were thus come to Antioch, and had gathered the whole Christian church there together, they rehearsed all with humble gratitude, that God had done for human salvation (o) with the working of them two, in the several

to chap. xi. 23 xiii. 43. (b) See chap. x. 41. vi. 5, &c. (i) Comp. last note. By vote, or stretching out their hands, see 2 Cor. viii. 19. (j) The same with pastors and bishops, Acts xx. 17, 28. Tit. i. 5, 7. 1 Thess. v. 12. (k) See chap. xiii. 14. (l) See chap. xiii. 13. (m) Named from Attalus, a king of Pergamus. (n) See chap. xiii. 1, &c. (o) Acts xv. 12. xxi. 19. God was notably present with

#### REFLECTIONS.

blessings wherever they come. <sup>c</sup> The way of heaven, though rough and narrow, leads to an august and blessed state, Matth. v. 10, 12. xvi. 24 Rom. viii. 17, 18. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. iii. 12. To be severely tried, is a chief glory of God's most illustrious servants. Patience and constancy are noble virtues. It is not sufficient to plant, and to sow, without diligently caring for the growth. Steadfastness doth well become the evidence and importance of faith. <sup>d</sup> Elders or bishops should instruct the ignorant, strengthen the weak, comfort the dejected, and preside in public religious assemblies. Whatever we do in the advancement of the gospel, let us acknowledge that God does it by us. Apostolical exhortations ought still to have the same power with us, as formerly. Success of Christ's ministers

*places to which they had been sent, and, in particular, how he had opened wide the door of faith unto vast numbers of the late idolatrous Gentiles<sup>c</sup>. And there they abode (p) long time in sweet religious fellowship with the Christian disciples.*

## CHAP. XV.

### SECT. LXVII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND then certain men, which lately came down thither from those in Judea who were converted to Christ, taught the brethren of Gentile original, and said unto them in earnest positive terms, Except ye submit to be<sup>a</sup>

them, by his grace, see Psal. cxix. 123. Luke i. 71. (p) Supposed about two years.

(a) See Gen xviii. 10. John vii. 22. By such initiatory rite, they were bound to the whole law, Gal. v. 3. Here was not the

### REFLECTIONS.

ought to encourage their followers to pray and labour. <sup>c</sup> People are glad to tarry long among those with whom they have been successful.

<sup>a</sup> To be tenacious of old rites and principles, has been common to every age. The Jewish forms were of divine original, but are now happily superceded by circumcision of the mind; as in Deut x 16. Rom. ii. 28, &c. The greatest mischief that hath been done to the Christian religion, arises from those who, even from pious zeal at first, would introduce what it doth not require. It is being too easy and indulgent to support them. Some there be, who, observing that the world did not suit their lives to the rules that Christ hath given, have fitted his doctrine, as if it had been a leaden rule, to their lives. By the true light, shadows, figures, and ceremonies were abolished; so that the law properly understood, was spiritual. God suffers strife to arise, that he may evince how pernicious a religion is, which is wholly founded on ceremonies. To maintain that the grace of Christ, needs the support of numerous expensive rites, is to reproach it. Sedition is more hurtful to the gospel than the cruelty of persecutors. It is easy for superstition, to set

circumcised after the manner of (a) Moses' law, ye cannot be eternally saved by simple belief of the gospel. When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small (b) dissension and disputation with them who urged such unnecessary burdensome things, they of the Gentile stock by nature determined (c), under a special motion of the Spirit, that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them who (d) had been brought over to the obedience of faith, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders (e) of the church there, about deciding this grand<sup>b</sup> question. And from Antioch (f), being brought on their way by the kind offices of church-members, they passed through (g) Phenice and Samaria towards the capital, declaring, as glad news, the conversion of the Gentiles to divine truth: and by this means they caused great joy<sup>c</sup> unto all the faithful brethren. And when at length they were come to Jerusalem they were received with much respect of the Christian church, and of its chief governing branches the apostles, and elders; and they de-

least controversy about the moral law. (b) Comp. chap. xxiii. 10. xxiv. 5. (c) See Gal. ii. 2. (d) Possibly friends of the circumcision (e) Not to Peter alone, as the head of them. (f) See chap. xx. 38. xxi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11. (g) In both which there were Christians, chap. viii. 5, 14. xi. 19.

## REFLECTIONS.

men by the ears and highly perilous. Characters inclined to divisions, were not unknown even in the primitive ages. The gospel, after being embraced, is to all a religious law, and the sole method of justification! It was a great while before the benevolence of the Christian religion could sufficiently sweeten Jewish tempers, by conquering narrow notions and old prejudices. Impositions ought early to be stopped, for making indifferent things necessary, Gal. v. 1. It is foolish and antichristian to make terms of communion which Christ never made! Our sole unerring standard now, is what the apostles have wrote. From uncharitable censures for retaining the simplicity of Christ, let us appeal to his tribunal. <sup>b</sup> It is expedient often to take concurrent judgement of pious elderly brethren. <sup>c</sup> Nothing so delightfully affects the pious, as the glory of God and the good of mankind. In gospel success God

clared all things *(b)* relative to their work and success that God had graciously done with them. But there rose up certain *who had been* of the strict sect of the Pharisees, and which now believed, saying, That, of a truth, however agreeable their accounts were, it was indispensibly needful, after all, to circumcise such of them as were converts from heathenism<sup>d</sup>, and, along with this, to command them to keep the whole ritual law of Moses.

#### SECT. LXVIII. FROM VERSE VI.

AND the apostles and teaching elders *(a)* of the church came, on an appointed day, together in council, for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much *(b)* disputing among the inferior disciples<sup>a</sup>, some affirming and others denying, Peter rose up from among the multitude, and said unto them *(c)*, Men and brethren, ye very well know how that, a good *(d)* while ago, God *(e)* ever-blessed, made choice among us apostles, that the Gentiles first by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel *(f)*, as did Cornelius, and believe his glorious dispensation. And God, which knoweth the *(g)* hearts no less than things visible, concerning which we are now met, bare them witness, though uncircumcised, of their being taken into favour, giving them *who believed*, by a distinct effusion *(b)*, the miraculous gifts of the Holy

*(b)* See chap. xiv. 27.

*(a)* Called also bishops, and for most part then chosen from among the earliest converts. *(b)* Comp. verse 22, 23. see Gal. ii. 1.

*(c)* Wisely so called even by Peter, in regard of Mat. xxiii. 8.

*(d)* Referring to chap. x. *(e)* Comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 10. 1 Kings viii. 16.

*(f)* These were first-fruits only. comp. chap. xi. 3, 18. *(g)* So 1 Sam. vi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, &c. *(b)* See chap. x. 44, 45.

#### REFLECTIONS.

is supremely to be adored. <sup>d</sup> After the coming of Christ there was no farther use for circumcision and the other Mosaic rites, since all who sincerely believed were children of Abraham.

<sup>a</sup> Inspiration might not always be so instantaneous and express as to supersede deliberation and mutual advice.

Ghost, even as he did unto us *of Jewish origin at the beginning*; and put no difference between us. *on account of mere externals*, and them, purifying their hearts and lives by *simple* <sup>b</sup> *faith in the blessed Lord Jesus*. Now, therefore (i), Why tempt ye the patience of Almighty God, by opposition to so clear and decided a testimony, to put still a (j) yoke, if you could, upon the neck of the proven disciples, which neither our <sup>c</sup> fathers, without the utmost difficulty (k), nor we their descendent children, were able to bear? But we, far from acquiescing, do believe for truth unquestionable, that through the unmerited rich (l) grace of God by the Lord Jesus Christ, we Jews shall be saved for ever, even as they (m) from among the Gentiles.

28. (i) Why provoke him to anger, Mat. iv. 7. (j) Metaphorical for what is severe and galling, comp. Gal. v. 1. The rites of Moses had no inherent ground of obligation, and they were enforced by the most awful sanctions. Compare that which is so sweetly qualified, Matth. xi. 29, &c. (k) The words do not import an absolute impossibility, Mat. h. xix. 23, 24. John vi. 6c. Eph. ii. 14. (l) Or favour, and not by Mosaic works, see Gal. v. 6. (m) Comp. verse 10. Gal. ii. 15, 16. Or we Gentiles, even as they, the over-zealous Jews.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> He is pure before God who possesses this vital operative principle, Acts x. 15. <sup>c</sup> It is not consistent with justice in God to command what is impossible, though by what is difficult he may accomplish good ends. They provoke the Almighty who give not credit to his will when sufficiently revealed. By the affection of the heart, which is only known to God, doth he judge! God giveth his holy Spirit to plain obedient belief. He who knows the secrets of all hearts can easily distinguish. Dare any one call in question the proceedings of divine wisdom? We ought not to envy the happiness and liberty of others. Unscriptural imposition, as a term of Christian fellowship, is absurd, inconsistent, ruinous. The church have no right to make laws, but to judge by those of Christ.

## SECT. LXIX. FROM VERSE XII.

THEN all the multitude (*a*), *who till now had been open and zealous for the Mosaic rites*, kept silence, and gave decent audience afterwards to Barnabas and Paul, declaring (*b*) what *undoubted* miracles, and even (*c*) wonders Almighty God <sup>a</sup> had wrought among the Gentiles, *for their conviction* by them.

## SECT. LXX. FROM VERSE XIII.

AND, after they had held their peace, James *the son of Alphæus* (*a*), and one of the apostles, answered in his turn, saying, Men and brethren, *be pleased now to hearken unto me on this important question with suitable earnestness.* (*b*) Simeon Peter, our dear brother, hath declared with great clearness and comfort to us all, how God at the first did (*c*) mercifully visit the Gentiles, *who were long in a miserable ignorant and corrupt state*, to take out of them a people (*d*) *to be enlightened, sanctified, and saved*, for the honour of his name. And to this narrative of his do perfectly agree the words of the <sup>a</sup> ancient

(*a*) See verse v. 22. (*b*) See chap. xiii. 11. xiv. 3, 8, &c.  
(*c*) Comp. chap. ii. 22.

(*b*) See Matth. x. 3. He seems then to have presided over the Church at Jerusalem, chap. xii. 17. (*b*) Usually so named, before Christ called him Peter, comp. Matth. iv. 18. John i. 43. (*c*) Or at first looked down, see chap. x. 1, &c. (*d*) Comp. verse 17.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> All good ought to be attributed to the first cause. They who adhere close to scripture doctrine, need not fear openly, and of their own accord, to rehearse the same. The weaker sort, however, must be as little disquieted as possible, and their murmurs soon laid.

<sup>a</sup> Sentiments of religion ought to be held for true, which have clear scripture evidence; and none other. The divine condescension lays a great obligation on us to depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Let us look for the accomplishment of this

prophets; *particularly* as it is written *(e)* by *Amos*. After *(f)* this I will return to my people in mercy, and will build again to high eminence *(g)* the tabernacle of David's kingdom, which is at present fallen low down: and I will build again to perfection the very ruins thereof, and I will set it up in strength and glory far above all that ever was known before; that not only the Jews, but the residue of degenerate *(h)* men, even like those of Edom, might effectually seek after and possess *(i)* the Lord in his best love; and all the Gentiles, without exception, upon whom my name is called by way of distinction *(j)*, faith the Lord Most High, who doeth all these truly gracious and marvellous things. Thus, known unto God and predicted by him, are all his works relative to human happiness, from the beginning of ages in the world. Wherefore my plain and decided sentence, agreeable to divine truth<sup>b</sup>, is, that we trouble not them with the ob-

Rom. ix. 25, 26. *(e)* Chap. ix. 11, 12. Thus then the ancient Jews must have understood this prophecy. *(f)* Agreeable to the LXX, and sense also of the Hebrew. To be understood spiritually, Comp. Hos. iii. 5. Luke i. 32. Such restoration was complete. *(g)* Comp. 1 Thess. i. 9: God hath done more by Christ than what he engaged for. *(h)* So in the Hebrew: Descendants of Esau; and put for all other Gentiles. The bitterest enemy of Israel, and remnant of the most profligate abandoned idolaters. *(i)* So the Hebrew, comp. Deut. ii. 24, 31. *(j)* Mosaic ceremonies were an

#### REFLECTIONS.

glorious scheme, in a way of prayer with every possible endeavour. <sup>b</sup> Truth dictated in modest terms is very conciliating. Prudence leads to yield things not necessary to peace and edification. They are in the right who reject unscriptural terms! Who can speak better upon any subject than the Spirit of God? Whatsoever he hath ordained must be wonderfully done. Charity bears with the weak for a time on purpose to bring them to perfection. Mutual forbearance is the way to nourish concord. What tempts to sin or are the usual concomitants of it, should be abstained from; Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16. 1 Cor. x. 7, 8, 21. All church debates should be carried on with like seriousness, decency, order and peace; 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40. Rom. xvi. 17. No side whatever should push things to extremities: Where conscience is not concerned we should give up our opi-

*servance of our Jewish ceremonies, which from among the Gentiles are happily turned from dead idols to the belief and worship of one living and true God (k) by the gospel of his only begotten Son: but that, for their sakes who are yet weak, without delay we write authoritatively unto each of them, that they abstain in the strictest manner possible from pollutions of (l) meat consecrated to the above base<sup>c</sup> idols, and from (m) hateful customary fornication, and from eating things strangled, and from blood (n) either got in this way or by means of a different nature. For, as pertaining to Jews and how they may live, (o) Moses of old (p) time, no less than now, hath in every other (q) city them that preach the doctrine he had revealed unto him, being yet regularly and audibly read in the (r) Jewish synagogues every Sabbath-day.*

#### SECT. LXXI. FROM VERSE XXII.

*THEN, after taking the above sentiments under mature deliberation, pleased it the apostles whom Christ himself*

obstacle to this, and therefore abolished, Eph. ii. 14, &c. (k) See note g. (l) See verse 29. comp. Dan. i. 8. To eat was deemed a symbolizing with idolaters, 1 Cor. viii. 8, &c. See a learned Dissertation of Dr. Lardner's, upon this subject; in remarks upon Ward's Dissertations. (m) Comp. Prov. vii. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 13, &c. reckoned by Heathens, among things indifferent, or harlotry, 1 Cor. x. 20. (n) See Deut. xiv. 21. Lev. xvii. 10, &c. comp. Rom. xiv. 14, 20. (o) The efficient cause, put for the effect. (p) Or generations, so Psal. c. 5. Acts xiii. 36. (q) Where dispersed Jews live among Heathens. (r) Assemblies for sacred worship, like as in James ii. 2. comp. Luke iv. 17, &c.

#### REFLECTIONS.

nion, or peaceably remove; comp. Eph. v. 21. Phil. ii. 3. Rom. xii. 16. Women have no right to rule, teach, advise, dispute, or vote in the church; see 1 Cor. xiv. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 8, &c. What praise is due to Almighty God for the inestimable evangelical law of liberty? Gal. v. 10. May the blessed time come, when the ministers of Christ, of all denominations, shall agree to study the things which make for peace! Rom. xiv. 19.  
<sup>c</sup> Christian charity requires that people at times lay themselves under considerable restraints.



*did choose, and teaching (a) elders of the people, with consent of the <sup>a</sup> whole church then met, to send chosen men out of their own company to Antioch (b) where this controversy began, with Paul and Barnabas who had before stood up for the cause of Christian freedom; namely Judas, surnamed (c) Barsabas, and (d) Silas, chief men for character and rank of office among the Christian brethren; and they wrote letters to be delivered by them <sup>b</sup>, after this manner as to their import: the (e) apostles, and the elders, and whole brethren, send from hence greeting unto the holy brethren in Jesus much beloved <sup>c</sup>, which are of the Gentiles originally, who live in (g) Antioch, and other parts of the country of Syria, and likewise (h) Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard by indubitable evidence, that certain converts from Judaism, (i) which went out as under commission from us, have (j) troubled you with <sup>d</sup> unnecessary vexatious words, (k) subverting your souls, if not firmly withstood, saying, with confidence, as though God did authorize them, Ye must be circumcised after the manner which Moses did enjoin, and keep the whole ritual law, as you hope to be saved;*

(a) See chap. xiv. 23. 1 Pet. v. 1. (b) See verse 1. (c) Perhaps the same as in chap. i. 23. (d) Thought to be the same with Sylvanus, 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess i. 1. see Acts xv. 23. (e) No prerogative is here given to Peter above the rest. (f) Or saluting and rejoicing. Under which, as under peace among the Jews, every thing favourable was comprehended. (g) Metropolis of Syria, see verse 22. (h) Whereof Tarsus was the Metropolis, and where Paul was born, see chap. xxi. 39. xxii. 3. (i) See verse 1. comp. 1 John ii. 19. (j) Comp. Numb. xxxii. 7, 9. (k) A metaphor from

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Laymen should not be excluded from voting and judging in sacred matters. This synodal assembly, or association, is sufficient to authorize some special communion of churches, for advice and counsel; comp. note <sup>c</sup>, Sect. XVIII. Phil. i. 27. 1 Thess. ii. 14. <sup>b</sup> Greater faith is due to written than simply repeated words. <sup>c</sup> Christians ought to be close joined in the bond of love. <sup>d</sup> Things which have no connection with faith should not be urged or submitted to. It is cruel from quietness and certainty of mind to be the cause of doubts; see verse 19.

to whom *even we of first chosen rank to teach* gave no such commandment : It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one *(l)* accord for resolving that *question, and to give our joint authority thereon*, to send chosen men unto you, *along with our beloved fellow-labourers Barnabas and Paul ; men of eminent spiritual qualities, and that also have often hazarded their precious lives**(m)* for publishing the name and pure truth<sup>e</sup> of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, *and be this attentively regarded by you all* *(n)*, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things *more at large, with what we write, as our ambassadors by word of mouth*. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost *(o)* *wherewith we are endowed*, and to us *(p)* *all* <sup>e</sup> *who invariably conform to his direction*, to lay upon you no greater ceremonial *(q)* burdenthan these necessary things *(r)* *for the present* ; that ye abstain from eating *(s)* meats offered to idols, and from blood of brute animals, and from things strangled, *(t)* and from still more shameful fornication : from which if ye keep yourselves at

casting down a house. Or weakening your minds *(l)* Comp. chap. ii. 1. v. 12. *(m)* See chap. xiii. 50. xiv. 19. John x. 11. *(n)* See verse 22 Thus would their judgement be fully and certainly known. *(o)* To us guided by divine inspiration, see John xiv. 26. xvi. 13. *(p)* This they judiciously oppose to an alleged authority for error, verse 1. *(q)* The sweet yoke of the moral law Christians were ever to be subjected to, Mat. xi. 29, 30. Burden here seems to denote, something superadded to the gospel, for the present good of the church *(r)* To avoid giving offence to the converted Jews, and to facilitate their incorporation with the Gentiles. *(s)* Comp. Rom. xiv. 2, 3. 1 Cor. viii. 4, 7. *(t)* The flesh of animals not fairly killed, all the blood not being drained out

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>e</sup> To approve and support the friends of truth, is an encouraging and indispensable obligation. Unanimity among wise and good men should have great influence. <sup>e</sup> Christian teachers should be guided by infallible scriptures. A like decision with the present cannot be extended to any uninspired ecclesiastical councils. Things necessary to promote a free converse among Christians should be carefully studied ; and especially in a reli-

*the greatest distance, ye shall do, (u) as matters now stand, \* peculiarly well. And so we heartily bid you farewell, both in body and mind.*

## SECT. LXXII. FROM VERSE XXX.

SO, when they were *thus dismissed from the church at Jerusalem*, (a) they came to Antioch *where the controversy began*; and, when they had gathered the multitude of Christian believers there together, they delivered unto them the apostolical epistle. Which when they had read over with due respect and care, they rejoiced for the (b) consolation which it brought of freedom from a severe ritual yoke. And Judas and Silas being eminent teaching prophets also themselves, exhorted (c) the brethren \* at large, with many suitable words to be steadfast, and thereby confirmed (d) them in the true faith and practice of the gospel. And after they had tarried there a space, to observe the good effects, they were let go in friendly valedictions and prayers of (e) peace from the Christian brethren of Antioch, unto the apostles, (f) with their believing charge in Jerusalem. Notwith-

of them while warm. (u) See 1 Cor. vi. 13, 15, 18. Col. iii. 15, 6. A very common Gentile crime. This some interpret of such improper connection with Heathen spouses, as might seduce Christians to idolatry. This apostolic constitution continued for the two or three first centuries. *Tertul. Min. Felix. Eusebe.* After which, all hope of converting the Jews ceased and danger of offence. Therefore it seems to have been long obsolete, comp. Matth. xv. 11. Col. ii. 16. (x) Comp. chap. x. 33.

(a) Judas, Silas, Paul, and Barnabas. (b) Or exhortation, see Gal. v. 1, &c. (c) Like as in chap. iv. 36. xiii. 1, 15. (d) Comp. chap. iv. 22, 41. 1 Thess. v. 11, 14. (e) Put for all manner of happiness, Matth. x. 13. (f) Being chief, they are put for the

## REFLECTIONS.

gious way. \* Simple and modest terms become great office with power. How different from our apostolical manner is a spirit of domination and avarice? Liberty and truth will then triumph, when love melts and cements.

\* Christians are partakers of the same vocation and divine in-

standing, *under consent of the rest*, it pleased Silas (g) to abide there still. Paul also *his dear intimate* and Barnabas continued *somewhat longer* in Antioch, (h) *where before that they had many disciples*, <sup>b</sup> teaching and preaching *close* the *gospel* word of the Lord, <sup>c</sup> with many others also *assisting* them.

### SECT. LXXIII. FROM VERSE XXXVI.

AND *some considerable number of days* after, Paul, (a) *burning at heart with zeal and charity*, said unto his *beloved associate* Barnabas, <sup>a</sup> Let us go again and visit our *late converted* brethren in every city *about this*, where we have *before* preached the *evangelical* word of the Lord, and see how they do *as to their pure spiritual interests of knowledge, faith and piety*. And Barnabas, *from great natural affection*, determined to take *as a companion and assistant* with him *his nephew* John, whose surname was Mark, *and would have persuaded Paul to this*. But Paul, *judging more impartially* (b),

whole. (g) This was of advantage to Paul, verse 41. (h) See chap. xi. 25, &c. xiii. 1. xiv. 26, &c.

(a) Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 28. (b) Comp. Luke vii. 7.

### REFLECTIONS.

heritance. <sup>b</sup> It is natural for those who have been spiritual fathers, to have a peculiar affection for their offspring, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Upon such comforting practical addresses, doth the ministerial usefulness much depend. Phil. ii. 16. There may be sad remains of imperfection, in the very best. <sup>c</sup> The Christian minister's proper business is, to teach the word of the Lord, and not his own private notions. Were all men candid, how many disputes in ecclesiastical history might there be thus determined at the first hearing. *Lord Hailes*. Where people are ready to receive the gospel word, it should be gladly dispensed. Faithful messengers taste a generous pleasure upon earth, which shall yet be more amply rewarded in heaven. Deliver us, O thou Father of mercies, from lording it over thine heritage, by overbearing conscience and freedom.

<sup>a</sup> It is a very useful work, to visit and strengthen these families or churches which want stated helps. Good seed should

thought it not good *then* to take him with them, to much labour and prospect of suffering likewise, who departed (c) from them from Pamphylia, as above, and went not with them *when desired* to the same kind of arduous work. And the fit of contention upon that subject was so unduly sharp between them <sup>b</sup> both, though excellent men, that for a while they departed (d) afunder into different countries, one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto his (e) native island of Cyprus: and Paul chose his faithful friend (f) Silas, for a companion and partner in sacred work, and departed from Antioch, being recommended by the prayers of believing brethren (g) there unto the grace of God for

(c) Chap. xiii. 5, 13. Possibly he might come to Antioch, with the persons who brought the apostles' letters. (d) Comp Gen xxxix 9. Perhaps in like friendly manner. For their undoubted reconciliation afterwards, see 1 Cor. ix. 6. Col. iv. 10. (e) See chap. iv. 36. (f) Comp. verse 32, 34. (g) The effects were answerable. Like-

#### REFLECTIONS.

be cherished. <sup>b</sup> Mere human affection and relationship, ought not to move, in things purely spiritual. Different sentiments and conduct from these may obtain, without any thing like hostile hatred, comp Col. iv. 10. The best of men would need to be much on their guard in disputes. Apostles themselves were not perfect. Divine providence over-rules human infirmities, and even crimes to good ends. All sincere believers agree in what is fundamental, Heb. x. 24. The candour of the scripture writers is conspicuous. Contests among the good, are soon ended. All men of sense and manners, applaud moderation. What was most expedient for the success of the gospel was the sole ground of this contention, and not personal animosity. Disagreement in opinion, is of no importance, whilst men affectionately unite in furthering the gospel. The warmest spirits are not the most resolute and steadfast. The visible conversion and penitence of the fallen proves acceptable in his sight, who willetth the amendment rather than the death of a sinner; and therefore, they should be welcomed (as certainly Mark was) and taken into the fellowship of prayer, and breaking of bread. *Dion. Bishop of Alex.* Our anger should be kept within the bounds of moderation, that we may do nothing of which we may have cause to repent

*protection, aid, and success in their work.* <sup>c</sup> And he went through the whole region of Syria and (b) Cilicia, whence he was sprung, confirming the churches begun, both with regard to the obedience of pure Christian laws and (i) freedom from Jewish ceremonies.

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## C H A P. XVI.

### SECT. LXXIV. FROM VERSE I.

**T**HEN came he to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia, (a) in which, as before narrated, he had taught with good success; and, behold, a certain Christian (b) disciple was there, named (c) Timotheus, <sup>a</sup> the son of a certain woman, which was (d) educated a Jewess, and afterwards believed the Lord Jesus: but his father was a (e) Greek: which however was well reported of <sup>b</sup> for his probity (f) and good temper, by the

ly Paul was in the right. In the Acts, there is no mention of Barnabas after this. Mark also profited by Paul's severity, so as to deserve his esteem and commendation, note d. (b) Comp. chap. xxi. 39. xxii. 3. (i) See verse 23, 28, 29 xvi. 14. If the devout Gentiles had been bound to the whole law of Moses, the gospel success would have been much retarded.

(a) Perhaps the three first verses ought to be read in parenthesis, see chap. xiv. 6, 8. xx. 21. (b) Comp. chap. ix. 4. Well known to Paul before, but not to Luke, comp. 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 10. (c) A Greek word, compounded of God and honour. In estimation with God. (d) Her name was Eunice; 2 Tim. i. 5. (e) Or Heathen idolater. It was permitted to Jewish women, to marry strangers. (f) Comp. chap. x. 22.

### R E F L E C T I O N S.

us. <sup>c</sup> Some peculiar affection we owe to our native country, when not injurious to the general happiness.

<sup>a</sup> Though Paul knew the Christian liberty, he also knew how to condescend, 1 Cor. ix. 20. Moderation is one ordinary useful effect of a general good life! Well may eminent services be expected of such. <sup>b</sup> An evil name, though it be false, may hurt the furtherance of what is good. The pious never fail to

brethren that were *lately converted* at Lystra, and Iconium, *not far from it*. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, (g) *as a companion, evangelist and assistant*; and *with his own consent*, took and (h) circumcised him, because of the Jews which were numerous in those quarters, *and might else have been offended*; for they all knew that his father was a (i) Greek, *and would have shunned the company of each of them as unclean*. And as they went through the cities in the neighbourhood, they delivered unto (j) *such of them as were believers*, the decrees relative to Mosaisc rites for to keep upon record, that were ordained by a solemn council of the (k) apostles and elders which were met at Jerusalem. And so were the Christian churches established in the pure<sup>c</sup> faith, and increased in number daily. Now, when they had *with this remarkable success* gone throughout Phrygia, (l) *belonging to Lesser Asia*, and the region of (m) Galatia, *lying between the Euxine sea and Pamphylia*, and were<sup>d</sup> forbidden by a clear inward movement of the Holy Ghost to preach *as yet* the gospel word in

(g) See chap. xix. 22. Rom. xvi. 21. To this he might have been supernaturally directed, 1 Tim. i. 18. iv. 14. (h) Not done before his father, being a Gentile, verse 1.; his consent was necessary. (i) He did by no means judge circumcision necessary to eternal life. (j) Comp. Matth. xv. 24. (k) See chap. xv. 29. comp. Acts xvii. 7. (l) In and about where ancient Troy stood. (m) Called by some Gallo-Grecia, on account of certain Gauls going thither, to occupy and dwell in it, Gal. iv. 14, 15, &c.

## REFLECTIONS:

give their children a good education. Those of distinguished zeal, and early piety, are not to be lost in the crowd. Happy they who, from their parents, learn to become knowing and good. *Just. Mort.* Youth distinguished by religious judgement, is peculiarly endearing. *Dion. Bishop of Alex.* <sup>c</sup> Merciful visitations may be delayed, with a view to general benefit. Happy are the people, who lived under repeated gospel offers! Let us imitate the pious zeal of holy men. <sup>d</sup> Reasons of God unrevealed, men have no right to inquire after. It is not fit in any case, that they should withstand him.

*Proper* (n) Asia, after they were come to Mysia, a remote western province in Asia the Lesser, they assayed to go into another country thereof named (o) Bythinia; but the Spirit, as above (p) suffered them not. And they, passing by Mysia, came down <sup>c</sup> coast ways to (q) Troas. And then a vision appeared to Paul in the (r) night: There stood as it were a man of (s) Macedonia, from his habit and tongue both, and prayed him in an humble earnest manner, saying, Come over with speed into Macedonia, and help us to save our souls which are in the utmost danger of perishing. And, after he had seen the vision, immediately we (t) of Paul's company endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord Jesus had called us, after the above wonderful manner to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore, loosing from Troas, and the wind fair, we came with a straight course to the island of (u) Samothracia, and the next day (x) to Neapolis; and from thence to (y) Philippi (z) which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony (a) detached from Italy to supply

(n) That part of it, where the great city of Ephesus stood. Some time after this they were preached unto, chap. xix. 1c. xviii. 23, &c. (o) In which were the cities Prusa, Nicomedia, and Nicaea. (p) See verse 6. (q) Just by the side of old Troy; called likewise, according to some Antigonia, from Antigonus, a re-builder, comp. chap. xx. 6. (r) Perhaps by way of a very striking dream, comp. Dan. x. 12, 13, 20, 21. (s) That country from which Alexander the great went out, and conquered so large a part of the world. (t) That is, Luke himself and others. They might and probably did converse the subject together. Though Paul speaks of his historian in very honourable terms, yet no where, from modesty, does he mention his own name, comp. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. The divine wisdom here, is worthy of attentive thankful regard. (u) Inhabited by a mixture of Samians and Thracians. A small island in the Ægean sea, near the coast of Thrace, or Romania. (x) That is, the new city on the confines of Thrace, towards Macedonia. (y) Named from Philip, the father of Alexander. (z) Or else, first in the way from Samothracia. (a) Comp. verse 21. (b) Some think Strymone, flowing

#### REFLECTIONS.

\* See above note c.



*it with inhabitants ; and, having met with numbers who were well disposed to truth, we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the Sabbath, sacred to bodily rest from common labour and to solemn religious worship, we went out of the city for giving the least disturbance, by a gentle (b) river side, where (c) public prayer was wont to be made ; and, after this divine exercise we sat down, as teachers, and spake unto the pious women which resorted in considerable numbers (d) thither.*

## SECT. LXXV. FROM VERSE XIV.

AND a certain woman named (a) Lydia, a seller of purple (b) garments to the rich, of the city of Thyatira (c), belonging to Asia Minor, which, as a Jewish proselyte, worshipped the true and only God, heard those of us who spake to them of divine matters : whose (d) upright heart the Lord Jesus opened to her wish<sup>a</sup>, that she attended successfully unto the things which were spoken of Paul concerning his glorious nature and offices. And when she was (e) baptized, in token of sincere belief and thorough conversion, and such of her (f) household as were come to years, she<sup>b</sup> besought us earnestly, saying (g),

from Thrace. (c) A Proseucha, or Oratory ; less than a synagogue. So the Syriac, Philo, and Juvenal mention them, comp. Isa. lvii. 5, 6 (d) The men probably were fewer.

(a) A frequent name among the Romans. (b) Either dyed, or woven by her. (c) In the district of Lydia, and nigh to Mysia. (d) Comp. John vi. 37, 44. Rev. iii. 20. (e) See chap. ii. 38. viii. 37. (f) Perhaps all of them, as belonging to her. (g) Not as doubting, but the same as seeing or since, comp. Matth. xii. 28.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Jesus uses no force, but assists the willing mind to discern truth, and to be affected by it, Rev. iii. 20. The same grace of God, according to different dispositions, works variously, Deut. xxix. 4, 6. Matth. xiii. 1, &c. They are well fitted to receive the gospel, who ingeniously fear God, 1 Cor. i. 2, 23. Rev. xvii. 14. The influences of grace, are secret and gentle. <sup>b</sup> True faith is operative and worketh by love, Gal. v. 6. Gentle and kind proffers ought not to be despised more especially from

If *indeed* ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord in my *professed* public regards to him, come into my house, and (b) abide under proper hospitable usages there<sup>c</sup>. And she even (i) constrained us by her various and kind pleadings. And it came to pass, as we went to (j) evening prayer, a certain damsel possessed in common belief with a (k) spirit of divination met us on our way, which brought her (l) masters much secular gain<sup>d</sup> by a pretence of (m) soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us his (n) attendants, and cried out with great earnestness of voice and gesture, as we came on the road, These men are the undoubted (o) servants of the most high God, which are sent to shew unto us the true way of obtaining eternal salvation. And this did she not then only (p), but many succeeding days after. But Paul, being grieved<sup>e</sup> with such a repetition of testimony from a heathen demon, turned him back, and said to the evil spirit understood to dwell in her, I command thee in the name and authority<sup>f</sup> of Jesus Christ who is Lord over all (q) to

Jo. x. 35. xiii. 32. (b) Com. Lu. xxiv. 29. (i) See Gen. xix. 3. xxxiii. 11. 1 Sam xxviii. 23. (j) Comp. verse 13. (k) Or Python, from the heathen Apollo; called also Pythius, or Serpent; the symbol of wisdom. Such spoke as from their belly, and affected to utter oracles. His chief temple, was at Delphi, comp. Job. xxxii. 18, 19. (l) Or owners. (m) Revealing secrets, as of things stolen; giving hopes of success in journeying, &c. (n) Silas, Timothy, and Luke. (o) She spoke truth, but positively for no good end, comp. Mat. viii. 29. Mark i. 24. She might flatter them, to have access, and conciliate their affection. (p) Her words might be nearly the same. (q) Comp.

#### REFLECTIONS.

young converts. They who have profited spiritually, should be ready to own it by kind measures. <sup>c</sup> Hospitality to strangers and servants of the Lord, exhibits a fine specimen of Christian virtue. From such an example it appears, that Christian philosophy, or Theology, may be fairly reduced to a few heads. Physical predestination, ascribes all to God, and entirely subverts human liberty. <sup>d</sup> The credulous pay well to be imposed upon. People of timorous disposition, search into futurity. <sup>e</sup> The superstitious are easily instigated to destroy. *ibid.* <sup>f</sup> Applause is proper to be refused from an impure tongue. <sup>g</sup> Flattering evil spirits are to be treated with pure and holy zeal.

come immediately out of her. And he came out, to the conviction of every one present, the same (r) hour.

## SECT. LXXVI. FROM VERSE XIX.

AND, when her (a) masters saw that the hope of their gains from such wicked services was gone for ever, they, by means of an instigated mob, caught first Paul and then Silas, and drew them forcibly into the (b) market-place unto such of the rulers as kept court there; and brought them afterwards to the principal magistrates (c) whom they deemed most fit to avenge their supposed wrongs, saying, <sup>a</sup> under pretence of great concern for the public peace, these men being (d) hateful Jews, do exceedingly trouble the inhabitants of our city, and take upon them to teach religious customs which are not lawful for us to receive in faith, neither to observe in practice, <sup>b</sup> being a (e) colony of Romans. And the unthinking multitude, more exasperated than ever with these complaints, rose up together in violence of rage and clamour against them

Mark xvi 17. Acts v. 16. (r) Or instant. Soon known, from her manner of behaviour.

(a) See verse 16. (b) The forum, or court of justice. Timothy and Luke were less considerable. (c) Some, military officers. (d) Their language, manners, and worship would prove this diversity of country and religion. Jews and Christians then, were commonly blended. (e) See verse 12, 17. Attempts to introduce a new religion, were forbidden by the Roman law, *Cic. de Leg.* l. ii. c. 8, 10, 14, 27 *Lev.* l. xxxix. c. 16. *Suet. Aug.* c. 93. Though at home, every one might worship what deities they pleased, as might

## REFLECTIONS.

Satan is then most to be dreaded, when he transforms himself into an angel of light, Rev xiii. 1. If divining future events by human means were possible, it would be a curse rather than a good service. Ambiguous oracles, divert from the supreme Disposer.

<sup>a</sup> The good, from motives of private interest, are often calumniated as offenders against public order and happiness, see 1 Kings xviii. 17. <sup>b</sup> To innovate in religion, upon proper grounds, is no crime but a duty. Public consent alone, is no

*who only sought their chief good: and the too hasty credulous (f) magistrates with their own hands rent off their clothes in part, and when their backs were made <sup>c</sup> quite bare, commanded, without previous trial, the attending officers to beat them (g) with rods. And when they had laid many sharp stripes upon them, they cast <sup>d</sup> them contemptuously into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely, lest by aid of admiring followers, they should escape from further punishment, who having received such a charge from his superiors, did unfeelingly thrust them into the inner dark prison, <sup>e</sup> secured by strong doors from both friends and flight; and, to have all as safe as possible, made their feet fast in (h) the stocks of wood, closed together with iron locks.*

#### SECT. LXXVII. FROM VERSE XXV.

**AND** at midnight *when most others were in their*

conquered Provinces. (f) Comp. verse 20. Livy, Plutarch and others often mention this manner. *Cloaks.* (g) Some, military officers (h) Alluded to 1 Thess. ii. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 23, 25. A manner of punishment often mentioned by the Greek and Roman historians. (i) Sometimes the feet were painfully distended; and at other times both these and the neck put into a most uneasy posture. Their late scourged backs would add to both, comp. Job. xxiii. 11. xiii. 27.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Just reason of faith. <sup>a</sup> To punish without any certain knowledge of a just cause is a high crime, especially in rulers. It argues a great character, to be undaunted at suffering, and unelevated with caressments. In default of other evidence, some are tortured to speak against themselves. <sup>d</sup> One act of causeless cruelty, very often brings on another. They who are grossly ignorant of religion, depend upon the mouths of others, and set no bounds to their bitter persecuting zeal. The great hindrances to gospel progress, are secular gain, love of pre-eminence, and superstition. When persecution rages most, the purest spiritual comforts are in reserve. <sup>e</sup> A place of privilege among a tumultuous multitude, is vain. Cruel commands are not disagreeable to a fierce temper. How much more valuable is salvation than any worldly interest, comp. 1 Cor. iv. 13. Psal. cxxix. 3.

*foundest sleep, Paul and Silas prayed for support under their causeless and cruel sufferings, and sang praises<sup>a</sup> unto God who had thus highly (a) honoured them in his own good cause: and the prisoners, being awake by a sound so new and unexpected in those dismal dark cells, heard them with astonishment. And suddenly, while at this extatic devotion, there was a great earthquake, denoting some peculiar divine presence (b), so that the very foundations themselves of the large strong prison were most sensibly shaken: and (c), upon the back of that, immediately all the doors were<sup>b</sup> opened, and every one's bands were miraculously (d) loosed. And the chief keeper of the prison awaking by noise so unusual and various out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, as did at first occur to him by the joint endeavours of those who had been confined, and nothing doubting that they were all fled, he (e), from shame and dread of consequences, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing what indeed was so very probable, that all the prisoners had been fled. But, aware of this horrid rash purpose, Paul cried with a loud and earnest voice, saying, do thyself no such unnatural shocking harm; <sup>c</sup> for we are all here, to be laid hold of again, if it should seem proper. Then he called to his domestics for a light, and sprang quickly in to be satisfied of the truth, and came trembling, on account of the late miraculous interposition, and his former rude violence to the servants of heaven, and*

(a) See chap. v. 41. (b) See Matth. xxviii. 2. comp. Isa. xxiv. 18. (c) Comp. chap. iv. 31. xii. 7. (d) A symbol of what would spiritually happen, see chap. xii. 7. (e) See chap. xii. 19. Jailors in such cases, were to suffer the punishment of those who had been imprisoned. The guilt of suicide prevailed then: and was even

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Devotion is the most proper relief to people, in painful circumstances; it warms with unmerited bitter suffering. The testimony of a good conscience, gives happiness every where. <sup>b</sup> Divine merciful visitations to the people of God, are often nigheft, when they are least expected. <sup>c</sup> Goodness conciliates regard, and softens rude tempers. Charity seeketh not its own;

fell down (*f*) *with the utmost respect* <sup>d</sup> before Paul and Silas; and brought them out of their undeserved confinement into an open place, and said, under deep concern, O Sirs, I beg of you for all that is good <sup>e</sup> who are so clearly beloved of God, tell what must I now do to be (*g*) saved for ever? And they said, each of them in their turns, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach, so as to embrace his heavenly doctrine, obey his laws, and trust to his promises, and thou shalt be saved from the wrath to come (*h*) upon finally impenitent transgressors, and so shall every person in thy house who does the same. And they, taking advantage of his and their concern, spake unto him more at large the gracious (*i*) word of the Lord, and to all grown up people that were in his house. And, as a proof of his altered sentiments, he took them the same hour of the night and washed the blood from off their stripes, besides stemming what new effusions might happen by that means with cold water; and was baptized not far from the place of his conversion, by way of public acknowledgement, and to the (*j*) purging away of his former

dignified by the examples of great men. (*f*) The usual manner in the east, Mark v. 33. vii. 25. Luke v. 8. (*g*) This wise and comprehensive mode of expression, he might take from verse 17. He appears upon the whole, to have had an upright mind, like as in Luke iii. 10, 12. Acts ii. 37. Previous to this perhaps, even when chaining the apostles, he might have heard kind pious words from them. (*h*) Comprehending also an assurance of eternal life, see John iii. 15, and 36. Faith in Christ, as Messiah, imports every thing essential, chap. viii. 37. Rom. x. 9. Acts v. 31. (*i*) Who he was, and how he lived on earth, taught, wrought miracles, suffered, died, rose again, and ascended far above all heavens. All after he came home. (*j*) Comp. Acts ii. 28. viii. 12. A well known cus-

#### REFLECTIONS.

see more below. <sup>d</sup> They who give the most manifest signs of their interest in God's love, are the best spiritual directors. This is the most important question that can be proposed; and what faithful pastors do most of all seek after. Divine grace will melt the roughest heart into tenderness, comp. verse 14. <sup>e</sup> The truly brave, compassionate those who have been enemies. To seek refuge in hell, from the dangers of earth, argues mad desperation. Signs of repentance and faith have a peculiar

*sons*, he and all his people (*k*), whom by example and words he could influence <sup>†</sup> straightway. And, when he had brought them into his house *after this solemn service*, he set meat (*l*) on a table, before them, and greatly rejoiced <sup>‡</sup> at heart, for *so inestimable a good*; believing in, and owning the true God, and his wonders of love by a Redeemer, with all his house. And, when it was clear day, the *pretorian magistrates of Philippi who had before sentenced them without fair trial*, sent the (*m*) serjeants under their command, saying, Let those men who were yesterday imprisoned (*n*) go off peaceably. And the keeper of the prison gladly told this, saying to Paul, The chief magistrates have sent <sup>§</sup> their officers with orders to let you go hence: now, therefore, depart from where you ought never to have been confined, and go on in divine useful service with peace, not only free but happy. But Paul said unto them who were sent, They, whose commission you bear, have beaten us by their lictors with rods openly before the world, uncondemned likewise after a due legal procedure, contrary to justice and the law of nations, being free-born (*o*) Romans too <sup>h</sup>, and have both injuriously and

tom for admitting proselytes. (*k*) See verse 32, 34. (*l*) Like as in Luke v. 29. xix. 6. (*m*) Lictors or beadles. They usually carried a rod, or bundle of them in their hand, to distinguish them, see verse 19, 20, 22. (*n*) Fear from the late earthquake, and regard to justice, might now move them. (*o*) Comp. chap. xxii. 25, 27, 28. Paul means himself chiefly if not only. By the laws

#### REFLECTIONS.

claim to tender regards. <sup>†</sup> No time should be lost from professing essential truth. True faith is superior to every thing of this world, 1 John v. 4. It must be great satisfaction to a man when wife and children go over with him to true religion. No time or place is unmeet to hear and preach the gospel. It is natural to hasten rewards to pious instructors. Saving conviction doth readily submit to known gospel terms. To the grateful new occasions of thankfulness do perpetually flow in. <sup>‡</sup> Probity of mind is sure to acquire necessary divine truth, and to be suitably affected by it, chap. viii. 39. <sup>h</sup> It is competent for a Christian to defend his right and character, for the sake of justice and usefulness, comp. ver. 21. Though humble and

*reproachfully* cast us into *close* prison; and now<sup>i</sup> do they *pretend* to thrust us out (*p*) *privily*? nay, verily, we owe more to our own, and the sacred rights of our country; but let them, if they respect these most equitable laws of honour and truth, come themselves to make our innocence generally known<sup>k</sup>, and fetch us out from this confinement. And the serjeants returning told these undaunted words unto the magistrates: and they feared to have an action brought against them for illegal proceedings when they heard (*q*) that they were free-born Romans. And they came to their prisoners (*r*) and besought them earnestly to forgive what from ignorance and popular clamour they had done, and brought them out in the most gentle manner, and desired them without farther delay (*s*) to depart quite out of the city. And accordingly they went with honour out of the prison, and entered into the hospitable house of their friend and convert Lydia: and, when they had seen the Christian brethren there and in the neighbourhood<sup>l</sup>, they comforted them with hope of the

of that great state, to scourge such was unlawful. (*p*) Or, after a clandestine manner. (*q*) The well inclined to their doctrine, might else have been offended at tamely permitting such disgrace, where the law was clear and open. (*r*) They comforted and softened them with fair words. It was a degree of treason, *Cicero. Verr. comp. chap. xxii. 29.* (*s*) They might dread a new uproar, and to suffer still worse from the mob.

#### REFLECTIONS.

charitable as Christians, we are not to countenance tame passive obedience to tyrants. He is not just who decides what is right in itself without a fair hearing.<sup>i</sup> A public ignominy has claim to public fair restitution.<sup>k</sup> Piety and prudence, not pride, must be our motives in seeking redress. Reputation as ministers of Christ, is worthy of a guard! It is valuable knowledge to join tenderness with dignity. Let us be willing to hear reason and truth even from inferiors, and openly to repair injuries.<sup>l</sup> Earnestness and respect do witness sincerity. A proper sense of danger and misery is requisite to prevent both. No pleasure is comparable to that of being conducted from eternal death to the way of salvation. Extraordinary divine interpositions naturally tend to cheer and invigorate the pious; comp. Phil. i. 5, 7, 29, 30.



*like grace of God in tribulation, and, after suitable advices to constancy in faith and practice, departed elsewhere.*

## C H A P. XVII.

## SECT. LXXVIII. FROM VERSE I.

**N**OW, when they had passed *from Philippi westward* through (a) Amphipolis *a city of Macedonia*, and Apollonia *belonging to the same region*, they came to the celebrated (b) Thessalonica, where was a synagogue for religious worship of the Jews. And Paul, as his usual manner was (c), went in unto them, and, besides joining their devout celebrations of the Almighty for the space of three several Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of <sup>a</sup> the Old Testament (d) Scriptures; opening from thence suitable close arguments, and (e) alleging these with great exactness to prove that Christ must needs (f) have suffered <sup>b</sup> as he did a cruel and ignominious death, and risen (g) again from the dead to remove all

(a) So called, because washed upon both sides by the river Strymone. *Thucid.* l. iv. The inhabitants were a colony of the Athenians. Once the capital of Macedonia, now a town of European Turkey. (b) Of that country likewise, in the bosom of a deep bay; and built by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Named from a victory obtained over that people. (c) *Comp.* chap. xiii. 46. (d) Simply so styled, because of their excellence, *comp.* chap. xviii. 28. xxviii. 23. (e) Greek, setting before. (f) See Psalm xxii. Isa. liii. Luke xxiv. 26, 46. (g) *Comp.* Psal.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> The canonical books are the only proper ground of true faith, Eph. ii. 20. The heroism of Paul should be admired and imitated; Acts xx. 24. 1 Thess. ii. 2. <sup>b</sup> The necessity of Christ's suffering is here deduced from the ancient prophets, to evince that he was not to be an earthly prince, *comp.* Acts xiv. 22. Though no miracles are mentioned, there can be no doubt of their having been wrought, from 1 Thess. i. 5, &c. v. 19, 20, 21. A plain indication of the great modesty of the

*just ground of offence from this: and that this Jesus whom I preach<sup>c</sup> unto you among others, is the true Lord's anointed, or (b) Christ. And, during that time, notwithstanding former prejudices, some of them (i) believed an article so comprehensive and necessary, and therefore conformed to have their lot (j), the same with Paul and Silas; and of the devout (k) proselyted Greeks from Pagan to Jewish sentiments, a great multitude, and of the chief women both for station and office belonging to each not a few.*

#### SECT. LXXIX. FROM VERSE V.

**BUT** the Jews which believed not, moved with malicious envy, from the great numbers that had left them, took unto them certain lewd lawless fellows of the baser sort, who made a business of strolling through streets and markets to excite quarrels,<sup>a</sup> and gathered a large company for that purpose, and, by clamour with every visible sign of just provocation, set all who inhabited the city in an uproar; and assaulted with peculiar violence the house of Jason, whom they knew to have befriended Paul and Silas, and sought to bring him and them out to be torn by the people. And when they found them not who had given innocent rise to the tumult, they drew Jason alone their entertainer by force, and certain well known Christian brethren unto the present rulers of the city, crying as with one loud vehement voice, these wretches

xvi. cx. ult. (b) See John xx. 31. (i) Comp. Isa. liii. 11. (j) Or inheritance. See for evidence of his success, 1 Thess ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8. (k) See chap. xiii. 43. 50. xvi. 14. Such were well prepared.

#### REFLECTIONS.

writers of the New Testament. <sup>c</sup> General doctrines ought to be close applied.

<sup>a</sup> The delight of idleness is to become mischievous. United clamour drowns all force of argument, and is a common engine of zeal without knowledge. A cry of innovation and heresy is popular, and leads to mad effects. Like him and others, we must take joyfully the spoiling of our goods at times.

of men that have *elsewhere* turned the <sup>b</sup> too credulous world upside down, are come up hither also with their gross poisoning errors to disturb us; whom this Jason hath hospitably received, so as to become responsible for: and moreover, these all to a man do contrary to the most explicit decrees of Cesar, treasonably saying, that there is another <sup>c</sup> King (a) whom we ought to obey besides him, and even more than him, one Jesus who but lately did suffer at Jerusalem, as a vile malefactor. And they troubled the people to a greater degree than ever, and also the rulers of the city, when they heard these high <sup>d</sup> criminalizing things. And when they in office of magistracy had taken sufficient security of Jason and of the other people with him, that they would not molest the public, nor harbour such as they knew to have so great an evil in their hearts, they let them go home free for the time.

#### SECT. LXXX. FROM VERSE X.

AND the Christian brethren of Thessalonica, *fearing danger still to such important lives, from so obstinate and*

(a) It was treason in Rome to call any king save Cesar, without being permitted: and Macedonia was a Roman province, comp. John xix. 12, 15. xviii. 36. (b) See verse 36.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> The wicked first distress by falsely accusing, and then hate the more, Prov. xxvi. 23. ; comp. Acts xvi. 20, 21. Luke xxiii. 2, 5. They who complain of sedition are the common causes of it. <sup>c</sup> Most fit it was that our Lord should ascend before his disciples declared him king. Unhappy they who put far from them the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. A low pitch of understanding and a base turn of temper render people proper tools for the worst of practices. Hideous charges may be brought against the most innocent, the most benevolent and useful, comp. Acts xxiv. 5. Where proof cannot be found, clamour ought to be despised. <sup>d</sup> What is feasible at first sight may afterwards be disproved with ease. The religion of Jesus secures obedience; John xviii. 36. Rom. xiii. 1. &c. 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c. Prudent magistrates act warily. Politic men suspect every thing that is new.

*raſh a people*, immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by dark night unto (a) Berea, *not far diſtant*; who coming thither, went *as cheerfully as ever* into the Synagogue of the Jews, <sup>a</sup> *to worſhip the true God, and to hear from his holy law*. Theſe laſt they *happily found*, were more noble<sup>b</sup>, *free, and generous* (b) than thoſe *whom they had left* in Theſſalonica, in that they received from God's ſervants, the goſpel-word, with all readineſs of mind; (c) and *after due attendance*, ſearched at home the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things *now taught* were ſo as *Moſes and the prophets had foretold*. Therefore many of them *who did obſerve that wonderful correſpondence, under divine bleſſing*, believed more and more the evangelical doctrine, and its glorious author: alſo, beſides Jews, of honourable (d) women

(a) See verſe 13. Near Pella, the place of Alexander the Great's nativity. The word berea. ſignifies cleannets, or neatneſs, in Arabic. (b) The Jews gloried in their being free and noble, by deſcent from Abraham; and therefore, the Bereans, imitating his rational faith, were his genuine offspring, ſee John vii. 17 v. 39. (c) See chap. xi. 1. 2 Cor. viii. 11, 19 ix. 2. (d) Or matrons, ſee

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Ill uſage ought not to diſcourage faithful miniſtrations. <sup>b</sup> They of upright and liberal minds, are given to inquire, and ſure to become ſucceſſful. Our beſt reaſon is to be uſed, in comparing ſcripture paſſages, comp Iſa. xxxiv. 16. Luke xvi. 29. John v. 39. Private people of all ranks ought to be praiſed and encouraged to uſe the infallible word. Men's authority would ſoon come to nothing, if the ſcripture were conſulted and examined. Againſt manifeſt ſcripture diſcoveries, no abſtract metaphyſical conſiderations ſhould be admitted. Patience as well as genius, ought to be exerciſed. Sentiments thus founded, can never fail. What is not certain, ſhould ever be ſeparated from what is ſo. Stop, where evidence is wanting. Dogmatize not upon doubtful points. Appear not thus ſuſpicious to true candour and modeſty. There is ſtill room left for admirable progreſs. It is no eaſy matter to deal with thoſe who deſpiſe the plain and ſober way of truth, and would rather go on diſputing for ever. Oppoſition drives ſects to extremes. We ought to guard againſt exceſſes, even in a good cauſe. We may learn ſomething from the miſtakes and faults of others,

*from rank which were originally idolatrous Greeks, and of men in that same situation not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had sure knowledge by information, that the pure word of God concerning Jesus Christ, was now preached of Paul at Berea, as aforetime to themselves, they came thither also under an obstinate malicious incredulity and tempestuously stirred up the (e)people<sup>c</sup> of their own kind, to oppose them as turbulent and dangerous. And then immediately the Christian brethren sent away Paul, who was the chief leader, and therefore most obnoxious, to go<sup>d</sup> as it were (f) to sail cross the sea: (g) but Silas and Timotheus his companions until now, being less known, abode there still, for confirming what had been so well begun. And they of Berea that conducted Paul, brought him through divers countries, and freest from adversaries, unto Athens the most celebrated city of Greece for arts and sciences of all kinds; and receiving a commandment went from him unto Silas and Timotheus for to come there to him with all speed, (h) they departed home.*

#### SECT. LXXXI. FROM VERSE XVI.

NOW, while Paul waited for them at Athens, his

Mark xv. 43. Acts xiii. 30. (e) So the Greek, comp. Psal. xciii. 3. 4. Isa. xvii. 12, 13. (f) They might have pursued, and taken him in a land journey. (g) Perhaps Luke before this, had left Paul's company, and been sent elsewhere. (h) See 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

#### REFLECTIONS.

if these serve to put us on our guard. In the investigation of sacred truth, fresh evidences arise which are ever pleasing and profitable to a serious inquisitive mind. True evangelical teachers, fly from trouble and dangers, only to be more useful. While the ministers of Jesus are learned and faithful in their office, they will desire no implicit submission, but rather wish to be tried by scripture standard. <sup>c</sup> Prejudice and bigotry, are capable of great diligence in an evil work; and they are ofteneft to be found among the low and illiterate. <sup>d</sup> Innocent art may be made use of, to avoid persecution, Mat. x. 16.

zealous spirit was (a) exceedingly stirred in him, with grief, when he saw the inhabitants of so renowned a city for literature, wholly given over to all sorts of gross scandalous idolatry. Therefore disputed he concerning religious matters, with his kinsmen after the flesh, the Jews, first, to bring them over to Christ, and with the devout (b) Persons whom they had proselyted from Paganism; and in the public market daily with them of other sects that met with him and showed any<sup>b</sup> desire to be instructed. Then certain (c) philosophers of the (d) Epicureans who<sup>c</sup> held immediate pleasure to be the chief good, and of the (e) Stoics who were understood then as the most rigid supporters of virtue, encountered him (f)

(a) Literally a sharp edge was set upon his spirit. Yet were his words serious and affectionate, comp. Psal. cxliv. 4. John xiii. 27. xiii. 21. xiv. It was a city of temples and idols. Cic. Pausanias mentions more in this city, than in all Greece. Another Heathen writer says, that you will more easily find a God, than a man. (b) See verse 4. (c) This name, which was introduced by Pythagoras, and signifies lovers or students of wisdom; he justly thought more modest, than wise men, which was in use before that. (d) From Epicurus their head; who is said, by his friends, to have sought tranquillity in the way of virtue. His followers more generally sought it in bodily ease and pleasure. He denied in effect, both creation and providence. (e) They were much averse to Epicurus and his sentiments: were denominated from Stoa, or Portico; would have all natural affections and passions eradicated; and thus spoke of their wise men, as equal to God. Yea, at times, as his superior. They held all kinds of vice to be equal, and all things to be under fate, or necessity. They asserted God, with the Platonists to be the soul of the world (f) Comp. Luke xiv. 31.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Godly men cannot look upon impious deeds without sad emotions, 2 Pet. ii. 8. The grossest superstitions do often flourish in the most polished cities. Pure zeal has nothing of imprudent furious heat in it, but proposes truth with modesty and wisdom. The most improved state of human reason needs to be taught by divine revelation. <sup>b</sup> No pains should be grudged in bringing people to salvation, by true knowledge of God and of Christ. <sup>c</sup> To hear, believe, and acknowledge what is new, upon sufficient evidence, is not reprehensible. Disputes among sects more fond of victory than truth, pro-

*by turns warmly: and some said in their haste of violence, What will this idle (g) babbler say<sup>d</sup> which deserves our further notice? other some, He seemeth to be a (h) setter forth of strange (i) new gods, to the exclusion of those whom we know: because he preached unto them Jesus, as one who wrought miracles and was taken up to heaven; and the future state of endless enjoyment of him there, by a like (j) resurrection. And they took him by the hand from among the people, and brought him before their principal rulers and judges in great general causes, unto the celebrated hill of the (k) Areopagus, saying, May we be allowed to know from thee at large, in so convenient a place out of crowds and noise, what this<sup>e</sup> new*

(g) Retailer of scraps. Some, from scatterer of words; others, news-gatherer and retailer; like those who collect for sale, what falls from market buyers and sellers. A base fellow or prattler, is the general idea. (h) Or a proclaimer, with public allowance. It was no crime reckoned. (i) Or demons, signifying spirits or genius's; which were common objects of worship in the Gentile world: their princes and heroes, frequently attaining divine honours, after their death. (j) Some might take the Greek word generally translated resurrection (the chief point of Christian faith) for a new deity; like shame, famine, revenge, desire, &c. comp. verse 31. (k) Or Mars Hill, where they met. A supreme court, first instituted by Cecrops, one of their early kings, in honour of Mars, their God of

#### REFLECTIONS.

duce a talkative sort of philosophy and a vain ostentation of learning. <sup>d</sup> To endeavour lessening characters by general indirect insinuations and unjust calumnies is exceedingly base. They who have been accustomed to imagine themselves possessed of all truth are hardest to convince. All useful discoveries have had to struggle with such prejudices. Every art and talent was displayed to support their falling cause; hence, truth only could succeed with the young. Beautiful and important discoveries, do often become the sport of the presumptuous and ignorant. A superficial taste of philosophy may incline the mind to atheism; but a full draught thereof brings it back again to religion; comp. Acts ii. 12. <sup>e</sup> Modesty, morals and good sense will keep people at a distance from the Epicureans. To be instructed in the knowledge of the nature of the divinity should be our early and vehement wish. Among endless intricacies of speculation the young and illiterate are apt to be

doctrine (*l*), whereof thou speakest to the undiscerning multitude is? For thou bringest to appearance certain <sup>†</sup> strange things to our ears who have learned much before, and hardly to be borne: we would fain know therefore after a clear, plain, and full way what these things mean. (For indeed most of all the native Athenians, and the vast number of (*m*) strangers which were there with them, for trade, arts, learning, and commerce <sup>‡</sup>, spent their time in next to nothing else, but either to tell or to hear (*n*) some new thing.)

### SECT. LXXXII. FROM VERSE XXII.

THEN Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, to be distinctly seen and heard by so great an audience, and said unto them boldly, (*a*) Ye gentlemen of Athens, your demand is most agreeable to me, because I perceive that in all things which relate to religion ye are rather too (*b*)

war. who is said to have sat there. (*l*) Curiosity might be their chief aim, see chap. ii. 12. (*m*) Most of the neighbouring countries sent their young nobility and gentry thither, to be under celebrated professors of the liberal arts and sciences. 2 Mac. ix. 6. (*n*) Still the newer the better, says *Thucid.* l. iii. Cleon and others object to them, that they were slaves to things new, and despisers of old Demosthenes, Mark vi. 31.

(*a*) So their own celebrated orators, Demosthenes and Eschines had been in use to begin their discourses. Here is an example both of courage and address. (*b*) Or seemingly very religious. Addicted much to worship invisible powers, chap. xxv. 19 Greek, fearing demons, or gods; and is of a middle sense, either good or

### REFLECTIONS.

bewildered. Of the state of men after death the Stoics spake uncertainly. They seem to have formed no system on a subject so interesting to the hopes and fears of rational beings. <sup>†</sup> Some philosophers seem to have valued doctrines as they were obscure; whereas, the criterion of truth is usually placed in clear and evident perceptions. <sup>‡</sup> They who are very inquisitive after news, are very credulous and easy imposed upon. Those conversations and writings which have brought the name of free-thinkers into disgrace, have contributed to spoil taste as well as morals.



superstitious, <sup>a</sup> compared with the people of far less literature. For as I passed by the public markets and streets of your large elegant city, I beheld your devotions before consecrated statues, and other of your (c) hallowed things, I found among the rest, even an altar for sacrifices and offerings, with this very remarkable inscription, (d) To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye so ignorantly worship, him with all respect declare I unto you, and how he ought to be worshipped. The Almighty glorious and everlasting God that made this immense fabric of the world, above and beneath, and all things therein, seeing that he is uncontroulable Lord, (e) proprietor of heaven and (f) earth, dwelleth not as his residence in temples made with human hands only: neither, like the great among yourselves, is he to be worshipped with men's uplifted hands, or with costly offerings, as though he needed any thing of that sort to complete his (g) happiness,

bad, agreeable to the nature of the subject. Here the favourable sense was most probably taken by so prudent a person. A handsome conciliating manner. (c) Comp. Dan. xiv. 27. 2 Thess. ii. 4. (d) In a raging pestilence, it is said, that Epimenides the Cretan, gave advice to sacrifice to the God to whom this matter belonged, without a name, to prevent mistakes. Other heathen authors mention altars with like inscriptions. They feared that some one God might escape them. Paul's manner is prudent and skilful, to what was objected to him, verse 18. Herein virtually did the people of Athens express their ignorance of God. Paul therefore, uses such descriptions as did confute both the errors of their learned and common people. The discourse no doubt, is much abridged. (e) Psal. cxxxv. 6. To create is surely the justest ground of dominion, universal, independent, and absolute; nor can this belong to any save one, see chap. xiv. 15. (f) See Isa. lvi. 1, 2. Acts vii. 48. In heaven and elsewhere, he may specially manifest himself, Matth. vi. 9. 1 Kings ix. 3. 2 Kings xix. 15. (g) Comp. Acts vii. 48. Psal. l. 8, &c. Mic. vi. 6, &c. A prevailing notion among the Heathens was that their gods fed on the

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Public teachers ought not to irritate by offensive names, but to win by civil manner. What piety can there be in making objects of adoration to ourselves without, and even against divine revelation? Religion, though a false one, has wonderful effect upon men's minds. There is nothing so absurd, nothing

seeing, as sole original author, he giveth to all both men and beasts life, <sup>b</sup> and breath of the spirit for continuation of this, (b) and all things else necessary, convenient, and even pleasurable; and hath made of one blood, from a single parent, all nations of men, however distant and likewise different now from one another, for <sup>c</sup> to dwell on all the (i) face of the earth, and hath determined the times of their living both as individuals and communities, before appointed by his all-knowing wisdom, and also the bounds of their habitation: that they should (j) seek the supreme and only (k) Lord who is remote from human eyes, if haply they might feel with proper diligence after just apprehensions of the nature, will and friendship of him, and find him <sup>d</sup> successfully; though he who is no object

fumes of sacrifices. (b) Comp. Gal. xxvii. John iii. 5. (i) Comp. Luke xxi. 35. Gen. i. 28. Psal. xv. 6. This struck at the root of the whole Epicurean system. (j) Comp. Isa. lv. 6, &c. Heb. xi. 6. Similitude taken from things groped after in the dark.

#### REFLECTIONS.

so impure and immoral, which an enthusiast cannot adopt as a part of his religion. <sup>b</sup> It is divine goodness, and not simple nature that each of his works are indebted to. He cannot, therefore, receive back from them more than his own. An horror at the dire effects of superstition has induced some to have recourse to atheism. God being unlimited, himself invisible, and filling both heaven and earth, is in all places fitly adored *Just. Mort.* Without expressly attacking any of the sects, Paul gives a plain summary of his own religious principles; in which he is a charming model to reformers. The worship of God is essential to the preservation of empire. <sup>c</sup> By a common nature it hath pleased the Almighty to cement his reasonable offspring. They are to be looked upon as brethren. <sup>d</sup> From effects, we may come to the true knowledge of the efficient cause; Psal. xix. 1, &c. Acts xiv. 17. Rom. i. 20. The knowledge of nature will ever be the firmest bulwark against atheism, and surest foundation of true religion: it inspires love and adoration of the Creator. The argument from the order and design that evidently shews itself throughout the universe, is the shortest and simplest of every other, ever agreeable, new and surprising. While we still meet in our inquiries with hints of greater things yet undiscovered, the mind is kept

*of bodily sight be not far in his essence from every one of us, (l) by clear marks of his most wise and powerful love : for in (m) and by him we live \* preserved, and continue to move, and have had our being ; as certain † also of your (n) poets have in effect said, For we are also his ‡ spiritual offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, by likeness to his divine reason and will, we ought not to think that the godhead whence these glories are derived is like unto comparatively mean insensible (o) gold whereof idols are made, or silver, or marble and other precious stone, graven by the most skilful art*

(k) See verse 24. (l) See Gen ii 7. (m) Comp. Rom. xi. 36. Acts xiv. 17. Psal. civ. 27, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Job. xxvi. 10 Dan. iv. 14. (n) Who were to the heathens as prophets ; like Homer, Hesiod, Meander, &c. But in the writings of Aratus the Cilician, and countryman of Paul, more express than any other. Our apostle was versant in learned writings, Tit. i. 12 and his argument with authority in the present case, was peculiarly suitable, comp. 1 Cor. xv. 33. (o) See Psal. cxv. 3. Isa. xl. 18, &c. xlv. 5, 6,

#### REFLECTIONS,

in a pleasing expectation of making a farther progress, acquiring higher conceptions of that great Being whose works are so various and hard to be comprehended : Being, all directed by perfect goodness ! They who speculate as they ought cannot but be excited and animated to correspond with the general harmony. The scheme will improve from particular to more general and just views for perpetual admiration. From what we are able to understand of nature, we may entertain the greater expectations of what will hereafter be discovered to us. As there are no inquiries of a more arduous nature than those which relate to deity, or more important ; so there are none in which the utmost caution and soberness of thought are more requisite. \* Civil and polite literature is far from being foreign to the business of divines. It is highly convenient sometimes to speak to adversaries from profane writers, when they speak what is true and right. Without God willing and permitting no one can exist so much as for a moment, far less in comfort. † See reflections †. ‡ The rational nature is God's image in men. God, who has life in himself and communicates it to others, cannot be resembled by what is dead, see Is. xl. 18. xlv. 13. All the affections of our hearts and all the actions of our lives

and man's device both as to figure and place of abode. And from henceforth you ought to know, that the times of this gross heathenish ignorance even as to foundation articles, God in effect winked at, by not executing immediate (p) severe vengeance; but now this long dark night being well over, he commandeth all men, by our means whom he hath sent out and every where, to repent of their by past errors and sins, (q) in the sure hope of his pardoning love: because he hath appointed (r) a day in the which he will hereafter (s) as supreme Lord of heaven and earth, judge the whole habitable world in (t) righteousness, <sup>h</sup> by that very illustrious man (u) already made mention of, and whom he hath ordained to that end; whereof also he hath given (x) clear ground for assurance unto all men who are at due pains to inquire, in that he hath raised him from the dead (y) to a state of powerful and glorious exaltation.

#### SECT. LXXXIII. FROM VERSE XXXII.

AND, when they heard of the resurrection of the

(p) Comp. chap. xiv. 16. His eye as it were, did shoot over them, Deut. xxii. 1, 3, 4. (q) See Mat. iii. 2. (r) Or time. Determined in himself, yet wisely, graciously concealed. (s) See verse 24. (t) According to their several works, and without respect of persons, Rom. ii. 6, &c. (u) See verse 18, comp. Luke xxiv. 19. Acts ii. 22. x. 42. John v. 22, 27. Rom. ii. 16. (x) Comp. Hof. v. 9. (y) See Rom. xiv. 9. comp. 1 Tim. iv. 10. Matth. xii. 39, 40. John ii. 18.

#### REFLECTIONS.

should be consecrated to his service. <sup>h</sup> The resurrection and judicial power of Christ, are pillar-articles of the gospel. The sum of Christianity may be comprehended in few words, 2 Cor. v. 19. We ought sooner to excuse the defects of the weak and of the simple, as a child is more excusable than a man. The Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that day! 2 Tim. i. 18. Men's usefulness ought to be as extensive as their influence. A charge upon mankind to repent, should humble the very loftiest of them: But who can repent without having this in his power? The resurrection of Christ demonstrates how others may be raised.

dead to life, some, *who held this to be absolutely impossible and ridiculous* (a), mocked the apostle; and others more wisely moderate, said, We will hear thee again (b) *when more at leisure for it, of this very new and singular matter.* <sup>a</sup> So Paul, *observing how little these careless worldly men did regard divine instruction*, departed from among them (c) *unhurt.* Howbeit, certain men of that very audience, *came close* (d) unto him as a teacher, and, after more full private discourse with them, upon gospel evidence <sup>b</sup> believed in one true God, and his blessed only begotten Son, Jesus Christ: among the which was Dionysius the celebrated (e) Areopagite, and a woman of no small rank likewise named Damaris, and others with them less eminent for birth, station, office or fortune.

(a) They did not reflect on like specimens, in natural things, John xii. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 36. (b) Even of this number, possibly few did ask any such thing. (c) It does not appear, that he was brought hither as a criminal. (d) See chap. v. 13. ix. 26. x. 28. (e) One of the magistrates, comp. chap. xiii. 12, &c.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Valuable discoveries keep up curiosity and expectation. Every step of true knowledge gives a glimpse, or faint view of what lies beyond it, though yet unrevealed. It is a weak conceit of sobriety or ill applied moderation to conceive that any one can search too far or be too well studied either in the book of God's word, or in the book of God's works. While they take care that they apply not knowledge to pride, but to charity; not to ostentation but to use. Even a small success in cities of corrupt manners, ought to be taken notice of with gratitude. <sup>b</sup> It is of the nature of uprightness to rest upon solid evidence. Paul's accommodation to Jews and Gentiles was widely different, and to both most proper. His rebukes were insinuated rather than openly and harshly administered. In the beginning he took his arguments from what men best knew. Religious discourse, governed with meek wisdom, seldom fails to have great success. They who judge before hearing, convict themselves of shame and folly; Prov. xviii. 13. xxv. 15. comp. Deut. xxxii. 2.

## C H A P. XVIII.

## SECT. LXXXIV. FROM VERSE I.

**A**FTER these things Paul departed from Athens, *where his success upon the whole had not been very remarkable*, and came to Corinth, *another famous city of Greece* (a), *in Achaia*; and found a certain man *who had been a* (b) Jew, named (c) Aquila, born in Pontus of Asia, *near the Euxine sea*, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, *a* (d) woman of great eminence and piety, (because that (e) Claudius the fifth Roman emperor <sup>a</sup> had commanded (f) all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them *for employment*. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them *for a time*, <sup>b</sup> and wrought (g) *for his subsistence*, (for by their oc-

(a) Situated in a narrow isthmus. between the Ægean and the Ionian seas; a city of great trade, rich, luxurious and proud: destroyed on this last account by the Romans, but afterwards rebuilt by Julius Cæsar, *Strabo Died. Sic.* (b) Now a Christian. (c) See verse 24. (d) Therefore mentioned before her husband, Rom xvi. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 19. (e) A foolish man, under the government of wives and servants, see *Suet. Claud. 25. Dio. l. lx.* (f) With them Christians were blended, and the former in particular, were numerous. Sueton mentions this edict, and seems to insinuate, that tumults, or the dread of them did occasion it. (g) It was a maxim among the Jews, that he who did not bring up his son to a trade, did in effect, teach him to be a thief. In these hot countries, field-camps, or tents were often used, comp. Acts xx. 34. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 1 Thess. ii. 9. For the same reason among the wiser Jews, Rab-

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> A timorous and suspicious temper leads to punish both the guilty and the suspected. Persons and things may innocently occasion tumults, without being the criminal causes of them. If bigots and persecutors will abuse the virtuous and the modest for speaking the truth and supporting it with proper evidence, they are criminal, and not the persons whom they persecute. <sup>b</sup> None ought to be ashamed to learn and exercise manual employment when necessary, even though far above the common in religious wisdom. The apostles sought no interest of this

cupation they were (*b*) tent-makers, *for camps in war and for home conveniences*. And, *for their sakes who did attend*, he reasoned in the Jewish synagogue every Sabbath day, *out of the ancient prophetic books*, and persuaded *c* numbers of the Jews, and *also* of the devout (*i*) Greeks. And, when (*j*) Silas and Timotheus *who had been left at Berea*, were come from thence to Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit (*k*) *with ardent zeal*, and earnestly (*l*) testified to the Jews *from scripture predictions*, that Jesus *whom he taught* was (*m*) Christ. And when, *by unconquerable prejudice*, they still opposed themselves, and even (*n*) blasphemed the holy name by railing, he (*o*) shook his raiment clear as he could of all that was theirs, and boldly said unto them, Your blood, *who are*

bins themselves did learn a mechanic trade. (*b*) Composed of linen cloths, or skins. (*i*) Profelytes to Judaism. *Suet. Tib. c. 32.* mentions such attending and disputing; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 15. i 14, 16. (*j*) The same with Sylvanus, 2 Cor. i. 19 comp. Acts xvii. 14, 15. (*k*) Comp. Luke viii 45. xix. 43. Acts xxi. 25. Some, pressed by the Spirit to teach, Acts xx. 22. comp. Jer. xx. 8, 9. Am. iii. 8; 2 Cor. v. 14. (*l*) See Luke xvi. 28. (*m*) Messiah, or anointed, chap. xvii. 3. (*n*) See chap. xiii. 45. (*o*) Comp. Mat.

## REFLECTIONS.

world by their office. What credit could such have found with the world, if the force of truth had not been upon their side? How easily might the Jews have refused the principal facts of Christianity, if they had been asserted without grounds? Places of chief concourse and wealth are apt to become most vicious as to riot, sensuality, and pride. To maintain one's self by labour for the sake of Christ, is highly commendable. No man knoweth to what straits he or his children may be reduced. Suitable associates in gospel labours are to be owned with affectionate gratitude. So are such companions in the nearest relations of life. Disinterested benevolence puts enemies to the blush, 1 Cor. ix. 1, &c. and conciliates regard. *c* For the sake of inquiring after truth, all proper means ought to be attended. It may be agreeable to the Spirit of God that we continue to preach with diligence even where we know of little good which has formerly been done. How pleasant and edifying is it, to recognize apostolical earnestness?

*so malignant, will be (p) now upon your own heads<sup>d</sup>; I am clean of guilt in your destruction: from henceforth, leaving you who are thus hardened in obstinacy, I will go and preach the gracious truth of God by Christ, unto the (q) pitiable Gentiles.*

## SECT. LXXXV. FROM VERSE VII.

AND he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named (a) Justus, one that, *from being an heathen, now (b) worshipped the true God*, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the (c) chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord Jesus with all the grown (d) up members of his house; and many more of the Corinthians who were not Jews, hearing Paul teach, believed with their hearts, and, professing their full purpose of adherence were baptized publicly unto (e) the remission of their former Gentile

x. 14. Acts xiii. 51. (p) See Lev. x. 9, 12. 2 Sam. i. 16. (q) Comp. chap. xiii. 46. xxviii. 28.

(a) Some M, S S. read Titus Justus. (b) See chap. xvi. 14. xviii. 4. By this time he might likewise have become a convert to Paul's doctrine. (c) One of them, see Matth. ix. 18. Acts xiii. 15. (d) So John iv. 53. Rom. x. 17. (e) Comp. chap. ii. 38. 1 Cor.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>d</sup> Each must be answerable for their own fault and ruin, who have been fairly dealt with. The upright and affectionate admonisher though not successful, may have ease in his mind. The more that truth is resisted, the more earnest support it requires. They who would rather perish as be saved, must stand to their own harm. Inveterate prejudice will prevail even over demonstration. Just indignation may be mixed with grief. Impenitent unbelievers are their own murderers. No person should have countenance to live in idleness, even upon a religious pretext. By despising the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, we give mankind the most convincing proof that we believe Christianity to be true, upon such strong evidences. To demand hires for lectures, was held by certain heathen sects, as sordid and unphilosophical.



*sins.* Then spake the (f) Lord and head of his church to Paul in the night by a (g) most certain vision, Be not afraid from (h) personal infirmities that you shall want success, or that this people will have it in their power to hinder you, but continue to speak boldly as you have begun, and hold not thy peace from high salvation subjects: for I am with thee for protection and (i) all-sufficient aids, and will take care that no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much <sup>a</sup> well disposed people (j) to hear, even in this large, rich, and luxurious city upon the whole. And he, by this encouragement of his divine master, continued there no less than a year and six months, most faithfully teaching the (k) good word of God among them.

## SECT. LXXXVI. FROM VERSE XII.

AND when (a) Gallio was the deputy (b) *proconsul* of (c) Achaia, the unbelieving (d) Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul who drew away so many of their people, and united them in one body to Gentile converts, and brought him to the judgement-seat, say-

i. 14. (f) See Acts ii. 36. (g) Either real appearance, or by affecting his mind, see Mat. xvii. 9. Acts x. 3, 17. (h) See 1 Cor. ii. 3. 1Sa. lxii. 1. (i) Comp. Matth. xxviii. 20. Acts vii. 9. x. 38. (j) See chap. xiii. 48. John x. 16, 26. (k) Comp. chap. xiii. 46. xvi. 32.

(a) The brother of Seneca the philosopher, who dedicated to him the book of a happy life. He was a prudent man, and of a mild temper. (b) One who administered the consular powers in provinces, subject to the Romans, chap. xiii. 7. (c) Part of Greece, and wherein Corinth was the chief city. (d) See verse 6. 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Men must be disposed to truth, who can hear it with advantage. Stubborn opposition must not always stay the Lord's people from working. The malice of a few, ought not to hurt the health of many. In the worst of places, there may be numbers disposed to life everlasting. Our wills ought always cheerfully to be sunk into the known will of God. Christ is sufficient for every difficult case, 2 Cor. xii. 9, To have much people for him in return, is signal honour

ing, *with much furious clamour*, This wicked (e) fellow persuadeth numbers of our men to worship God, by the direction of one Jesus Christ, contrary to the divine law of Moses. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth in answer to the charge brought against him, Gallio would not give them the trouble of making an apology, but said unto his accusers the Jews: If it were a matter of wrong (f) to any of you which the civil statutes of the empire forbids, or wicked deliberate (g) lewdness of evil to the state, O ye Jews! reason and the obligations of my office would have required that I should bear patiently with you who accuse with so much eagerness in order to attend and give sentence: <sup>a</sup> but if it be a mere controversial question (h) of words, and names (i) peculiar to your-

(e) Rather this man, the charge being quite a legal one. Lord Hailes' Disquisitions upon this passage in particular, worthy to be considered. (f) Or injury in general. (g) Vile crafty villany, comp. chap. xiii. 10. More properly mischievousness. In old English, this had the same meaning with lewdness. *Wikkilffe* worst trespass. *Findal*, evil deed see Acts xvii 5. It comes nearest to graceless, riotous, knavish trick, or trick of knavery. *Disg.* (h) A matter of disputation, or speculative controversy. Gallio appears to have had no knowledge of Christianity, and therefore the common censure against him ought to be moderated. (i) such as the force of circumcision, and the sense of ancient prophecy.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The civil magistrate has nothing to do in matters of faith and conscience. They ought however, to encourage those by protection, who are most wisely and religiously disposed. To give authority to falsehood is terrible; among sects and parties no violence should be allowed. Truth left to itself is great, and will triumph in the end. Novation has been a common charge against some of the best worshippers of the Almighty. Would to God that all princes, judges and magistrates, had always been of Gallio's mind. A people ever busy, and full of contention, seldom meet with regard from their superiors. The mutinous and seditious temper, is apt to inflame by opposition. From politic reasons, popular outrages are sometimes overlooked. By suppressing a rising spirit of persecution, Gallio became an instrument of providence for establishing the Christian church at Corinth. The error of the Jews in accusing

*selfes, and of rites which concern your law, look ye, with my entire leave, to dispute it privately, as becometh; for I will be no judge between you of such indifferent matters to external peace and policy. And, with signs of obvious displeasure, he drave them away from the judgement-seat. Then all the Greeks, who occasionally had heard Paul preach and were nigh to the Roman proconsul, took (j) Solthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue since Crispus' (k) conversion, and beat him who had already met with such contempt, even before the judgement-seat: and <sup>b</sup> Gallio cared for none of these things relative to the riot and battery which he knew were customary (l) and did not much, if at all, affect the public ease.*

#### SECT. LXXXVII. FROM VERSE XVIII.

AND Paul, after this *tumultuous opposition*, tarried there yet a good while *increasing and confirming the Corinthian church*, and then took his (a) leave of the Christian brethren with whom he had made so long and comfortable an abode; and sailed thence on his way towards Jerusalem into Syria, and with him his two intimate friends (b) Priscilla and her husband Aquila; he, but a late convert from Judaism, having shorn the hair from off his head in Cenchrea (c), the sea-port of Corinth upon

(j) Some think he was soon after this converted, 1 Cor. i. 1.

(k) Comp. verse 8. xiii. 15 Or he might rule another synagogue.

(l) It is thought that some little time before this, when Timothy and Silas came to Paul, he wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians, and now his second.

(a) With orders and admonitions, Greek, comp. Mark vi. 46. Luke ix. 61. (b) By gifts, or otherwise, the might be eminently distinguished, see verse ii. 3. Rom. xvi. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 19. (c) And towards the Ægean sea. Lechea was another port to the other

#### REFLECTIONS.

Paul at this tribunal was egregious; as leaving a Heathen magistrate to determine the manner of worshipping God: so apt are zealots to overlook consequences. Lord Hailes. <sup>b</sup> Prudence and moderation are truly amiable. With religious freedom permitted, the gospel would be received universally.

*the east: for he had made (d) a vow to that effect. And he<sup>a</sup>, the apostle, came to the noble city of Ephesus, belonging to Asia Minor in Ionia, and left them who had accompanied him there: but he himself previous to this, entered into the synagogue, and, as his usual method was, reasoned<sup>b</sup> with the Jews of that place out of the ancient scripture prophecies. When they (e) whose minds were openest to conviction desired him earnestly to tarry longer time with them if possible, he consented not then; but bade them for the present an affectionate (f) farewell; saying, I must by all means keep this solemn (g) religious feast that cometh in the much frequented city of Jerusalem for my dear Lord's interest: but be ye sure of this, that I will return again (h) unto you whom I have found so well disposed, if God<sup>c</sup> will be pleased to favour me. And he accordingly sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at the port of (i) Cesarea upon the Mediterranean sea, and gone up to (j) Jerusalem from thence, and tenderly saluted the Christian church there, he*

sea, on the west side. He was now on his way, where the greatest number of Jews were, comp. 1 Cor. ix. 20. Acts xxi. 23. (d) No uncommon thing then with travellers, even in a civil way. He seems to have made it upon some remarkable deliverance from his enemies. It could only be fulfilled in the land of Judea. *Reland.* (e) Understood by some, of Aquila and Priscilla. (f) See verse 18. (g) That of Pentecost, at the end of the harvest, chap. xx. 16. Not from conscience, but some design of greater usefulness, comp. Rom. xiv. 5. Gal. iv. 10, 11. (h) So he did, chap. xix. 1. (i) Comp. chap. viii. 40. x. 1. (j) Comp. John vii. 8, 10. xii. 20.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> It may be prudent, in many cases, to give place to furious rage. For preventing offence, as much as possible, we ought to frame ourselves to all men's wishes. Some are so wedded to superstition, as to require much time and pains both for plucking them from it by better views. Certain things may not be evil in themselves, unless trusted to with confidence. <sup>b</sup> Faithful ministers lose as little time, and as few good opportunities to be useful as they can. Happy they who have health and spirit, to go through great pious labours. It is prudent to water or renew instruction, to cherish the divine life. <sup>c</sup> All human purposes and engagements ought to be piously

went down *soon after* to (k) Antioch the celebrated capital of Syria. And after he had spent some time *diligently* there, he departed *also from* (l) this very flourishing church, and went regularly over all the country of Galatia (m) where he had been before, and Phrygia, *nigh to this*, in proper order, strengthening<sup>d</sup> *every where* the faith, piety, and virtue (n) of all the upright disciples to Jesus.

#### SECT. LXXXVIII. FROM VERSE XXIV.

AND while thus employed in those parts, a certain Jew named (a) Apollos, born at (b) Alexandria, an eminent city of Egypt, an<sup>a</sup> eloquent man upon all subjects, and mighty in the (c) knowledge and application of Old Testament scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was partly instructed in the way (d) of faith and duty taught by the Lord; and being (e) fervent in the spirit for promoting

(k) See chap. xi. 19 Jerusalem lay nearer to Cæsarea, and therefore could not well be passed. (l) Comp. chap. xi. 26. xv. 35. (m) Chap. xvi. 6. comp. 1 Cor. iv. 15. (n) Comp. Acts xiv. 21.

(a) See 1 Cor. i. 12. iii. 6. Some, the same as Apella, Rom. xvi. 10. (b) Built by Alexander of Macedon, and in which were many Jews. At this very time the renowned Philo was one, comp. chap. iv. 38. (c) Comp. chap. vii. 22. (d) Comp. Mat. xxii. 16 Acts ix. 2. xiii. 10. He had as yet but the elements, see Luke i. 4. Matth xxviii. 19, &c. (e) See Rom. xii. 11.

#### REFLECTIONS.

qualified, 1 Cor. iv. 19. James iv. 15. <sup>d</sup> A flock win to Christ, is entitled to our very best care.

<sup>a</sup> To be quick of apprehension, warm and pleasantly persuasive, is a great gift of heaven, and peculiarly well adapted to sacred matters. To cite and prove from scripture readily, is a high commendation, 2 Tim. iii. 15, &c. He is the most pathetic and eloquent, whose mouth is secretary to his heart. They who have learned the rudiments of the gospel, and are desirous of farther progress, demand our best attention. We must be glad to learn of any man things belonging to salvation. They who are zealous to do good, should have all proper assistance and recommendation. The Holy Ghost ever waits upon pious earnest endeavours. Humility doth best adorn the

*his glorious knowledge, he spake and taught diligently out of the ancient prophets, the things of the Lord Messiah, knowing only (f) as yet <sup>b</sup> such doctrines as were (g) preparatory to the baptism of John. And, so far as he understood himself, he began to speak boldly (h) for an immediate approaching Messiah, and the great need there was of genuine national repentance, in the synagogues of Ephesian Jews: whom when (i) Aquila and Priscilla had heard discoursing, they took him unto them for their guest, and <sup>c</sup> expounded unto him the way of God much more perfectly and distinctly. And, soon after, when he was (j) disposed to pass into the country of Achaia where Corinth was, the Christian brethren of Ephesus wrote by him, exhorting the disciples belonging to that important region, to receive him in true love with suitable kind offices: who, when he was come thither <sup>d</sup>, helped them much, both in discourse and good practice, which before that, by the pious (k) labours of his apostle Paul had believed the Lord Jesus (l) through efficacious*

(f) He must therefore comparatively have been a stranger to Christ's person, offices and benefits. (g) Comp. Mat. iii. 2, 11, 12. Mat. xxi. 25. (h) Comp. chap. iv. 31. ix. 27. (i) See verse 2, 3. (j) Perhaps from a strong motion of the spirit. (k) Comp. verse iv. 7, 8, 11. 1 Cor. iii. 6. (l) See verse 24, 25. 1 Cor. iv. 10.

#### REFLECTIONS:

happiest ministerial talents. <sup>b</sup> Men as they have ability, ought not to be reprehended for a modest communication of what they know. A preparation of heart, is absolutely needful to receive Christ. <sup>c</sup> Mechanics, though private persons, and having no church office, may teach at times people of far superior abilities naturally. To prohibit them to read the scriptures is highly criminal. Let amiable examples of diligence and modesty, be close imitated; and let none, however eloquent and learned, be ashamed to improve. <sup>d</sup> In all, without exception, there is room to increase faith, knowledge and goodness. They who are well armed with the scriptures, are best able to put enemies to silence. Young converts are most in danger from infidels. Differences of gifts should make no breach, comp. 1 Cor. iii. 4, 8, 21, 22. iv. 6. It is prudent to take recommendatory letters, as well as just to grant them. The glory of all gifts, graces and success is due to God.

grace. For, *intensely applying his strong reason and eloquence*, he mightily convinced (m) the unbelieving Jews of their errors, and that publicly, where all had leave to object or be benefited, shewing by the clearest Old Testament scriptures that Jesus whom their unhappy kinsmen had put to a cruel and ignominious death, was the (n) Lord's Christ.

## C H A P. XIX.

## SECT. LXXXIX. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, *diligently watering what Paul had planted there*, Paul himself, having passed through the upper (a) coasts of Asia (b) Minor, upon the Mediterranean sea, came, as he had (c) promised to Ephesus: and, finding there certain Christian disciples from Judaism, he said unto them, Have ye received the (d) miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost since ye believed (e) the gospel? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any (f) such plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost to be communicated as you now speak of. And he said with some surprise unto them, Unto what (g) belief then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's (h) baptism and doctrine. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the (i) baptism of strict obligation

Acts xi. 23. xiii. 43. (m) Or powerfully out-argued them, comp. Matth. xxiii. 1c. (n) Or anointed, see chap xviii. 3. xviii. 5. From the above character of Apollos, he is conjectured by some to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews; so replete with eloquence, fervour of spirit, frequent allegations from, and accommodations to the Old Testament.

(a) Or districts. (b) See chap. xviii. 23. (c) Comp chap. xviii. 19, 21. (d) See verse 6 1 Cor. xii. John vii. 39. (e) At that time they were often communicated, chap. ii. 38. viii. 17. x. 44. &c. (f) They had been baptized of John, and soon after left Judea. (g) Or doctrine. (h) So chap. xviii. 25. This was only the gospel rudiments, as it were. Yet was it, in effect, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus whom he foretold. (i) See

to repentance; saying unto the people *whom he did thus initiate*, That they should *thereby also bind themselves to believe on him which should come very soon after him*, that is, on (j) Christ Jesus his great superior. When they heard this *and the evidence thereof propounded to them at large*, they were *forthwith joyfully baptized* (k) *anew in the name of that heavenly master, the blessed Lord Jesus*<sup>a</sup>. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, *and supplicated Almighty God in their behalf*, the Holy Ghost, *in an abundant manner*, came on them; and they spake, *by this means*, with various (l) tongues *which they had never before learned*, and prophesied (m) *by praise and publication of divine truth*. And all the men *thus signally honoured* were about twelve in number. And he *from thence* went into the *sacred Jewish synagogue*, as his custom was elsewhere, and spake (n) *boldly at their several meetings*, for the space of three months, *disputing with much prejudiced adversaries*, and persuading, *by close affectionate application*, the more ingenuous of the great and glorious things concerning the kingdom of God, *under Prince Messiah*. But when divers of the Jews were hardened (o) *by expectations of a temporal deliverer*, and believed not *what was infinitely more momentous*, but rather spake much malicious evil of that most merciful way (p) before the weak and fickle multitude<sup>b</sup>, he departed from them *as hopeless*, and also fe-

Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. (j) Comp. Mat. iii. 11. John i. 26, 27, 29, 34, 36. Acts iii. 21. (k) So Acts ii. 38, 41. (l) Or languages, see chap. ii. 4. x. 44. 46. (m) Comp. Acts ii. 11. x. 46. Perhaps too they foretold things future, Luke ii. 57. (n) See chap. xviii. 27. (o) Comp. Acts vii. 51. Psal. xcvi. 7. (p) See chap. xviii.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> In baptism, nothing should be added or taken away from the original institution. The name of Christ comprehends his mission from *the Father*, and witness of the *Holy Ghost*. This respects the gospel at large and not a private sect. The doctrine of John did only prepare for what was better. Visible tokens express inward grace. <sup>b</sup> They are not to be held as apostates, who only depart from error. The ungrateful and malicious together shew themselves unworthy to be dealt with.



parated the disciples *thence, who had been in use to meet at synagogue worship along with the Jews*, disputing daily *through the week, from zeal and faithful regard to office*, in the public school of one Tyrannus, an eminent sophist, *whose profession did call upon others to oppose him if they would*. And this continued at Ephesus by the space of no less than two years, to accommodate such a large and greatly frequented city by strangers; so that all they which dwelt in the region of Asia Minor, by this apostolical diligence, heard the gospel word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and (q) Greeks. And God wrought special affecting (r) miracles by the hands of Paul, to convince gainsayers; so that, besides curing those who came, from the skin of his body were <sup>c</sup> brought unto the distant confined sick (s) handkerchiefs or aprons, and these being applied, the most inveterate diseases departed (t) suddenly from them, and the evil (u) spirits themselves went, in the same certain and sudden manner out of them.

#### SECT. XC. FROM VERSE XIII.

THEN while he abode there, certain of the vagabond wandering Jews, who affected the name of exorcists, from the power which they would be understood to have over demons (a) took upon them, for their own secular ends, to call over them which had evil spirits <sup>a</sup>, in imitation

25, 26. xxii. 4. (q) Those belonging to the people of God, and aliens, or Heathens, chap. xiv. 1. (r) See Mark xvi. 20. Acts xiv. 3. (s) Both words taken from the Roman language, which was now very much used, chap. xviii. 3. comp. Luke xix. 20. John xi. 44. (t) Comp. ch. v. 15 John xiv. 12. (u) See Mark xvi. 17. Luke x. 19.

(a) The same word as in Luke i. 1. ; endeavoured. Perhaps at first, they were permitted to do this with success, see Matth. xii. 27. Several of the Jews, at this age, pretended to such power,

#### REFLECTIONS.

It is prudent to prevent hinderance to divine teaching and faith. To secede, therefore, may become an essential duty. <sup>c</sup> Any thing will do in the hand of God.

<sup>a</sup> The power of working miracles demonstrates great confi

*of the apostle*, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying (b), We adjure you to *desist*, by that powerful Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were no less than seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and among the chief kind of the (c) priests, which did so attempt as others had done. And the person who was possessed of the evil spirit boldly answered and said, upon bearing the adjuration (d) as above: Jesus I know from sad experience to have such a right, and his servant Paul I also know to be endowed with the like miraculous authority against us; but who are ye (e) that dare presume to act as they do? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped furiously on them, and overcame them all by repeated stripes and tearings, and prevailed against them so far, that they fled before him out of that house (f) next to naked, and severely wounded in their bodies. And this was soon known<sup>b</sup> to all the Jews and Greeks (g) also dwelling at celebrated Ephesus; and solemn reverential fear fell on them all who understood and reflected upon the dreadful force of those who were possessed; and the sacred name (h) of the Lord Jesus their obvious superior, was devoutly (i) magnified. And many that believed the doctrine of Paul, came to him, and penitentially (j) confessed their bypast guilt, in presence of his companions, and shewed (k), with deep remorse, their former evil deeds. Many of them also which till now had used curious magic arts (l) to deceive the credulous multitude brought

*Joseph. Ant.* l. viii. c. 2. (b) Comp. Mark ix, 38. Luke ix. 49. (c) See Matth. ii. 4. (d) Verse 13. (e) We pay no regard to your attempts; we despise them. (f) From want of good intentions, they did not expel, but were themselves expelled. (g) See verse 10. (h) Put for his person, as in Acts iv. 12. v. 11. (i) See Luke i. 46. comp. 2 Sam. vii. 26. (j) Comp. Mat. iii. c. 8. (k) Widely different this from private auricular confession. (l) There did abound at Ephesus. *Plut. Hest. Cl. Alex. Philist.*

#### REFLECTIONS.

dence in Jesus. How often since has that worthy name been made use of for filthy lucre! <sup>b</sup> The word of God, which is for salvation to the upright, is terrible to hypocrites! Truly

their *impious* books together, and *voluntarily* burned them *as vain, pestive, and shocking*<sup>c</sup>, before all men: and they counted the price of them *accurately*, and found it fifty thousand pieces of *current* silver (*m*) *for which they might have been sold*. So mightily grew the *gospel* word of God in its effects, and (*n*) prevailed over *all opposition*.

## SECT. XCI. FROM VERSE XXI.

AFTER these things were ended, *and his long stay at Ephesus had proved so very successful*, Paul next purposed (*a*) in the spirit, when he passed through Macedonia, (*b*) *in the several cities of which were many converts*, and (*c*) Achaia, to go<sup>a</sup> to the (*d*) *mother church at*

Here Satan was made use of to destroy his own cause and kingdom. The mysteries and institutions of that pretended art; their words and methods of incantation. Such things must have struck an unusual awe, upon all that heard them. (*m*) Probably Attic Grecian drachms, each equal to a Roman penny; whereof eight are in a crown. In whole 6250 of these last. The number of converts, as well as their sincerity, must have been great, comp. Deut. xxiii. 18. (*n*) Comp. Acts 6 7. xii. 24. Some think that in this city, and at this time Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians; and not long after, his first epistle to the Corinthians, comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 19, v. 10 Acts xviii. 19 &c.

(*a*) Or in his mind so John xiii. 21. Rom. i. 9. 1 Cor. ii. 11. (*b*) See chapters xvi. xvii. (*c*) Comp. chap. xviii. 12. (*d*) See

## REFLECTIONS.

amazing is the after virtue and piety of real converts. <sup>c</sup> Men ought not to dispose for secular gain, what they have reason to believe would corrupt others. An inclination and endeavour to repair injuries to truth and holiness, marks the genuine nature of repentance. Erroneous zealots burn the books of others or vilify them to a great degree, while they magnify their own. The sincere disciples of Jesus soon come to be distinguished from the false! The world is not to be accounted of, in comparison of an honourable and faithful discharge of duty. The flame of love and zeal consumes sins, however customary, reputable or gainful. None have right to appear in the character of Christ's servants, who do not cordially believe in him.

<sup>a</sup> The apostles always went where they hoped to do the

Jerusalem, with charities which he had collected through Greece, saying, After I have been there *some little while*, I must also see the famous city of (e) Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered spiritually unto him by their joint assistance, as his forerunners, (f) Timotheus and (g) Erastus : but he himself stayed from the execution of his above purpose, in (h) Ephesus of Asia Minor for a season. And the same time of that abode, there arose no small stir among the people, about that way (i) of doctrine which had been taught by himself and others. For a certain man of the city, named Demetrius, a silver-smith by trade, which made high polished silver (j) shrines for their goddess (k) Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen (l) and those employed by them; whom he called together, with the numerous workmen of like occupation, to add weight to his interest and to exhibit an idea of general sad distress, and said, Sirs, ye well know that by this craft of temple and image-making, we have our great <sup>b</sup> wealth : moreover, ye see with your own eyes, and hear much

Rom. xv. 25, 26. (e) Now the head and mistress of the world. His view in this was far from being secular, Rom. i. 10, 11 xiii. 15. xv. 23. Probably that had been revealed to him from above. The edict for banishing Jews from Rome, died with Claudius. (f) Of whom, see chap. xvi. 1. xvii. 14, 15. xviii. 1. (g) The same probably as in Rom. xvi. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 20. (h) See verse 26, &c. From hence some have thought he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. The fundamentals were laid, but proficiency was to be made. (i) See verse 9. (j) Models of their renowned temple, and images. (k) Reckoned the daughter of Jove by Latona, sister of Apollo, and patroness of hunting. (l) Comp.

#### REFLECTIONS.

greatest good. They knew the excellence of their doctrine, and that it would bear the severest examination. <sup>b</sup> Religion is often pretended where the world is most at heart ! An ardent desire of good fame, is only to be gratified by virtuous and beneficent actions. Erostratus burned the temple, only to be remembered. The device of Demetrius, though wicked, was well imagined. The same way priests and philosophers hated Christianity, as being fatal to their craft. They considered religion as a mere state engine. That which is in possession al-

*greater accounts still, that, not alone at Ephesus, so renowned hitherto for its opulence and grandeur, but almost throughout all the provinces of Asia whither our pious workmanship has been sent off and purchased, this intruder Paul hath wrought upon, persuaded, and turned away much people from their old opinions, saying, That they be <sup>c</sup> no gods at all for worship, which are made with (m) human hands: so that not only this our (n) craft is in danger to be set at absolute nought; but also, which is not to be thought of without horror, that the long and justly admired temple (o) of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her whole incomparable magnificence of honour and worship should be for ever destroyed! even she whom all Asia and, by their means, <sup>d</sup> the world itself, as one may say (p), worshippeth. And, when they heard these sayings of Demetrius, they were full of burning wrath, and cried out like mad men, saying, <sup>e</sup> Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the*

chap. xvi. 16. (m) See Psalm cxv. 4, &c. Jer. x. 3, &c. (n) Greek, thing, or business, as in 2 Cor. ix. 3 Col. ii. 16. (o) Ranked at this time, among the seven wonders of the world; and which then had subsisted 100 years. Pl. l. 36. c. xiv. Said to have been 420 feet in length; breadth 220; pillars 60 feet high; 229 years in building; and reared at the expence of all Asia Propria. (p) She was known and honoured under various characters; as the goddess of

## REFLECTIONS.

ways appears safest to politicians, 1 Cor. xv. 32. <sup>c</sup> Few people consider what the word *God* meaneth. Their sense of this high matter, is solely determined by custom and prejudice. What the love of gain sets on foot, superstition is sure to join. A wise man ought after an honest manner, to seek his own profit and the cause of him who is the only true God. <sup>d</sup> The catholic religion then was idolatry. Antiquity and universality therefore are not invariable signs of truth. Where many are called to do ill, the fault, by that means, is not so easily imputed to one. *Last*. There can be no incendiaries, or favourers of incendiaries among Christians. <sup>e</sup> Wrath is the chief support of error; and to correct error is too often understood as a great evil. A term of art has been often employed by crafty men with much success to raise disturbance and to mislead the unwary: A practice most disingenuous! Mobs go soon and clean

whole city, *through their artful management and influence*, was filled with (q) *confusion of numbers and noise together* : and having jointly caught by force (r) *Gaius of Derbe, and Aristarchus of Thessalonica*, <sup>f</sup> *both men belonging to the country of Macedonia*, Paul's close companions in travel, and his fellow labourers, (s) *they rushed with one accord, for the more effectual destroying of them*, into the open public (t) theatre. And, when Paul would have entered in unto the *enraged people, for defence of himself and friends*, the Christian disciples of *Ephesus* <sup>g</sup> *suffered him not to hazard so precious a life among so tumultuous a mob*. And certain of the chief both for station and employment of Asia, (t) *which were his friends in the main, on account of shining literature and virtue*, <sup>h</sup> *each, though not as yet fully converted, sent their servants unto him, desiring him in the most earnest manner, that he would not adventure himself into the theatre*. Some therefore *vehemently cried out one thing and some another* : for the assembly was quite confused ; and the more part by much knew not at all wherefore they were come together, <sup>i</sup> *being solely led by noise and*

hunting, travelling, childbirth, enchantments, &c. (q) Comp. Acts xxvi. 1sa. xxxvi. 3. (r) See chap. xx. 4 xxvii. 2. Col. iv. 10. Phil. xxiv. (s) 2 Cor. viii. 19. Acts x. 4 (t) A place fitted up

#### REFLECTIONS.

out of all order, being of sundry minds among themselves. Choose what part you will, another will be offended. In urging to mischief, the passions of the inconsiderate are not allowed to cool. *Laët.* <sup>f</sup> *The zeal of the heathens may rise up in judgment against the neglectors of true divine worship.* <sup>g</sup> *Good advice may be given, and ought to be heard from those of much inferior spiritual gifts.* The apostles were not always under the immediate leadings of a divine Spirit, comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 12. We ought not to be more zealous in the service of our Lord than he himself hath required. A warm imagination, and self-confidence are not apt to be steadfast. <sup>h</sup> *Candour and moderation are calculated to soften.* <sup>i</sup> *To the rise and progress of affairs mobs are entire strangers.* The superstitious spirit of a country is easily excited and rendered violent ; yea licentious in wickedness. *Dion Bishop of Alex.* To slay the Christians,

*the example of others.* And they drew one Alexander out of the multitude, whom they suspected to favour the apostles: the malicious Jews, to spirit up the rest, putting him violently (u) forward. And Alexander beckoned (x) with the hand, to still the noise if possible; and would then have made his defence unto the people. But, when they knew who were highest unto him, that he surely was a disaffected Jew to their worship, all the heathen idolaters, as it were with one voice, on purpose to confound their opponents the more, for about the space of two hours, cried out (z), as when they began<sup>k</sup>, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when, after their zeal and their breath were much spent, the town-clerk (a), who was versant in the laws, well known, and prudent, as well as an officiating magistrate, had so far appeased the people as to make them desist from bawling, he said, on purpose to befriend Paul and his associates, Ye men (b) of Ephesus, there is not any need of your gathering together in this confused and illegal manner; for what man of us all is there that knoweth not how that the illustrious city of the Ephesians is a devoted (c) worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the beautiful image which our tradition affirms fell down (d) miraculously from the supreme deity Jupiter. Seeing then that these things so well and universally known cannot be spoken against successfully by any shew of reason, ye ought to be instantly quiet from this so dangerous mobbing, and to do nothing

for general amusements. (u) Asiatic magistrates, who presided over their solemn rites and games. (x) Some think they meant no harm in this: but to justify themselves by an able speaker, from being charged of holding Christian principles. Others, that he had been the violent Judaizing Christian, who afterwards was so great an enemy to Paul. 2 Tim. iv. 14. (y) As in Acts xii. 17. xiii. 16. (z) Verse 28. (a) Chancellor, scribe, or secretary. (v) Comp. chap. xvii. 22. (c) Greek, sweeper, temple keeper, or guardian. (d) Said the priests, it was not, could not be made by human hands.

## REFLECTIONS.

seemed to some the alone acceptable service, *ibid.* <sup>k</sup> Mad obstinate zeal shuts its ears, and will hear nothing but of its own

*now or afterwards rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which, for any thing yet made manifest, are neither robbers of (e) churches<sup>1</sup>, where indeed they are not seen, nor witnessed (f) blasphemers of your justly favoured goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the other fellow-craftsmen which are with him, have a matter of guilt against any man, the law is open (g) to the injured upon proper days, and in suitable places, and there are (h) deputies from Rome; let them, before such, after a legal and orderly method, implead one another. But if ye inquire any thing concerning other high matters, like those of religion, it shall also be determined to satisfaction, after mature council, and by the proper courts, in a lawful held assembly. For (i) indeed we all at present, take my word on it, who have the public interest much at heart, and each of you singly, are in no small danger to be called in question and found liable to punishment, for this day's disturbance of the peace by a tumultuary uproar<sup>m</sup>, there being no adequate cause*

(e) Places of public worship; the same Greek word may be rendered, the house of the Lord. Hence the Scotch word Kirk. (f) They had only said of images allowed to be made with human hands, they were no gods verse 26. 35 compared. (g) Comp. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Exod. xviii. 16. 22. (h) Or proconsuls, one in every province, chap. xiii. 7. (i) For softness sake, and putting on at the same time an appearance of great fear. It was capital to raise a riot.

#### REFLECTIONS.

follies. <sup>1</sup> In certain cases, an ambiguity of phrase may be defensible. Threatening at times, may be fitly added to more gentle arguments. <sup>m</sup> It is the proper business of magistrates, to discuss causes, end all controversies, and punish malefactors. Neither private nor public matters, ought to be seditiously handled. The apostles were as careful as possible to give little offence to persons of different sentiments and religions; and, with all their zeal, observed an extraordinary decorum in their words and behaviour. It is much to the honour of truth, when her friends make no use of scurrilous language. Magistrates have nothing to do with private notions, which disturb not the state. Prudence is estimable, even where there may be great defect of principle. How blissful are the effects of true Christianity, Isa. ii. 20.



whereby we may give an account *to our superiors, that will satisfy of this noisy and vexatious concourse.* And, when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the *mobbish assembly from doing any further mischief.*

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## C H A P. XX.

## SECT. XCII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND after the uproar at *Ephesus* was ceased Paul called unto him the *Christian* disciples, and affectionately (a) embraced them, after fervent prayer for their welfare, with suitable advices to live agreeable to their wise belief, and departed for to go into (b) several cities of Macedonia, where there were converts to the truth. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much earnest exhortation, as to the duties of life<sup>a</sup>, he came into that part of Greece where Corinth and Athens were, and there abode three months, strengthening and establishing late converts in pure gospel faith and practice: and when the malicious unbelieving Jews (d) laid wait for him, because he drew away many from their synagogues, as he was about to set sail into Syria on his course to Jerusalem, he, with consent of the brethren, purposed rather to return through Macedonia, whence he had come, than hazard being taken by the (e) snares of his enemies. And there accompanied him

(a) After the manner of the east, Luke vii. 45. Rom. xvi. 10. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. (b) Such as Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. (c) See chap. xv. 33. At this time he appears to have wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xii. 14. xiii. 1. Likewise, about the same time, that to the Romans, chap. xvi. 1, 21.; and first epistle to Timothy. Not for his sake alone, but also the Christian church at Ephesus (d) Comp. chap. ix. 24. This probably did happen at Corinth, Acts xviii. 12. xiv. 2, 5. (e) These were natu-

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> To impress the mind and memory, things known must be repeated. The success of Christian doctrine, is a true minister's chief

into Asia Minor (*f*), Sopater of the city Berea; and of the (*g*) Thessalonians (*h*), Aristarchus and (*i*) Secundus; and Gaius (*j*) of Derbe in Lycaonia, and young (*k*) Timotheus; and out of Ephesus (*l*) in Asia (*m*), Tychicus and (*n*) Trophimus. These (*o*) all, going before, tarried for us (*p*) who were left with Paul, at the city (*q*) Troas. And we sailed away from (*r*) Philippi of Macedonia, after the days of celebrating the Passover by (*s*) unleavened bread, and came unto them who had formerly been sent off to (*t*) Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week (*u*) commemorative of Christ's resurrection, when the disciples (*x*) who religiously honoured him, came together as usual to break (*y*) bread in solemn remembrance of his awful death, Paul, by way of preparation (*z*), preached unto them the holy word of God<sup>b</sup>, ready to depart from Troas on the morrow; and, having begun late,

rally laid in the straight road. (*f*) For Sopater, as in some MSS. Rom xvii. 21. (*g*) See chap. xvii. 1, &c. (*h*) See chap. xix. 29. xxvii. 2. (*i*) A Roman name, though a citizen there. (*j*) See chap. xiv. 6. 20. Probably different from Gaius, in 1 Cor. i. 14. (*k*) Very eminent, chap. xvi. 1, &c. xvii. 14, &c. see 1 Tim. i. 3. (*l*) So one ancient MS. (*m*) Commanded, Eph vi 21. Col. iv. 7. (*n*) See chap. xxi. 29. 2 Tim. iv 20. (*o*) Some think these two last going, &c. (*p*) Luke in particular, who continued with him to Rome. (*q*) chap. xvi 8, 11. (*r*) Chap. xvi. 12, &c. (*s*) About April. An occasion he would certainly then improve, see chap. xviii. 21 xx. 10. (*t*) Or on the fifth day, comp. verse iv. 5. (*u*) Therefore called Lord's day, see Matt. xxviii. 1. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Ever after observed by Christians religiously; and in particular, for celebrating the Lord's Supper. (*x*) Verse iv. chap. xvi. 8. (*y*) So Syr. and Arab. see chap. ii. 42. 46 1 Cor. x. 16. Luke xxii 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 26. Usually then performed at night. The breaking was certainly a part of the ceremony, and not to be omitted. Whence their cakes seem to have been thin. (*z*) Comp.

#### REFLECTIONS.

joy and glory. <sup>b</sup> With the shortness of time, spiritual diligence ought ever to increase. The Lord's Supper is, or ought to be a common pledge of Christian union, as it is a necessary appointed mean of edification. Christ's word, and not our private sentiments, or fallible deductions from it, ought to govern us. The Lord's Supper is a most solemn and appropriate Christian

continued his speech <sup>c</sup> *with great earnestness* until midnight, *as not knowing whether he should have another opportunity.* And there were many candle and lamp-lights in the upper (a) *least frequented* chamber <sup>d</sup>, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window of some depth, which was open to prevent immoderate heat, a certain young *uncautious* man named (b) Eutychus, being <sup>e</sup> *fallen through lack of spiritual attention* into a (c) deep sleep: and, as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft in height to the ground, and (d), *by that dreadful accident,* was taken up to every appearance dead. And Paul, moved with compassion, interrupted his discourse, went down to where he lay without, and fell on him, and, embracing, so as to lift him up from the pavement, said, 'Trouble not yourselves on his account any farther; for <sup>e</sup> *be assured that his life is still in him, and by the divine power of my Lord, he shall be instantly restored to perfect health and ease.* When he, therefore, *after that conspicuous miracle,* was come up again to the room where he had been preaching, and had devoutly broken (e) bread in remembrance of Christ's death, and eaten with the other

John xiii. 31, &c. Mark xvi. 14. (a) See chap. i. 13. Reckoned by Juvenal the meanest. (b) Or well fortunate. (c) Certain of the fathers have ascribed this, in part, to Satan, whose pleasure it would be to disturb such a congregation. (d) Comp. 1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34. (e) Verse 7.

#### REFLECTIONS.

act, 1 Thess. ii. xix. 20. <sup>c</sup> Temple magnificence is not requisite for acceptable divine worship. It is not becoming serious and important subjects, with a desire to persuade and instruct others to be overnice in the choice of what is ornamental. They who regard things more than words, will express their thoughts in a lively useful manner. <sup>d</sup> That we incur not censure, or even suspicion, all prudent precautions are to be taken. It is the part of a good pastor, every where to refresh people's minds with pure Christian doctrine; and even when wished for to protract divine exercise. To suffer under guilt, is peculiarly grievous. Slumbering sleeping worshippers, are a disgrace to their profession. How many such do spiritually fall to rise no

believers, and <sup>s</sup> talked suitably (*f*) to such solemn exercise, a long while after, even till break of <sup>h</sup> day ; so, these things being over, he departed (*g*) from that house and city on foot. And they brought the young man within the house alive and whole, and (*h*) were not a little comforted after their late fore trial on his account.

### SECT. XCIII. FROM VERSE XIII.

AND we, who till now had accompanied Paul, went before him to ship, and sailed round the neighbouring promontory unto (*a*) Assos, on the sea near Troas, there intending to take in Paul ; for so had he appointed prior to our separation, minding himself, after enjoying a little more of the present company, to go thither a foot ; and when he met with us at Assos, we forthwith took him into the vessel, and came to (*b*) Mytelene, the chief city of the island Lesbos. And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against the country of (*c*) Chios, lying between Lesbos and the famous island of (*d*) Samos ; an the next day again we arrived at Samos itself, and tarried at the Promontory of Trogyllium nigh to this ; and the next day afterwards we came up the river Meander to

(*f*) From the Greek word, comes homilies, or sermons. (*g*) See verse 13. (*h*) It likewise secured honour and faith to Paul.

(*a*) Having a convenient harbour, and called likewise Apollonia, *Plin.* Of Natolia in Lesser Asia, situated on a bay of the Ægean sea, twelve miles south east of Troas. (*b*) Birth place of Pittachus, one of the wise men of Greece ; Alcæus the noble lyric poet ; and Sappho the poetess. (*c*) An island of the Lesser Asia, 100 miles west of Smyrna ; noted for wine. (*d*) In the Archipelago, 30

### REFLECTIONS.

more ! <sup>s</sup> Such an example of the right method of Christian instruction, ought to be followed, chap xxiv. 26 It is a painful thing for a loving father, to part with most dear children. Zeal rises as departure draws nigh <sup>h</sup> See above We should, like apostles, always be ready to proceed from excellent discourses, to beneficent actions. Succeeding joy, upon the back of great distress, rises to rapture, *Psal.* xxx. 1, &c.

*the celebrated Ionian city of (e) Miletus, For Paul, (f) under whose direction the vessel was, had determined from motives of just prudence to sail by Ephesus the capital, on the other side of the bay, and in particular, because he would not spend the short time he had to spare in Asia Minor : for besides detention by pious believers there, he hastened, if it were <sup>a</sup> possible for him, to be at Jerusalem on the day of (g) Pentecost, to distribute the Christian charity with more advantage, and to take away Jewish obloquy, by worshipping in the temple.*

#### SECT. XCIV. FROM VERSE XVII.

AND from Miletus he sent *some of his companions* to Ephesus, *not far from thence*, and called to him the (a) elders <sup>a</sup> of the church there, and in the neighbourhood for taking farewell, with proper advice as to the execution of their sacred office. And when they were come to him in a body, he, like the father of the Gentiles, nobly and affectionately said unto them, as follows : Ye well know, my very dear friends, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner of teaching and behaviour I have been with you at all (b) seasons, serving the Lord Jesus, our common and beloved master with all humility of mind, in discharge of my important trust to poor as well as rich, and with many tears accompanying

miles south of Smyrna. (e) Where Thales, the most famous of all the seven wise men was born and educated. Here too, the fishers were said to have drawn from the sea, the golden Tripod, dedicated to Delphian Apollo. (f) Chap. xix. (g) The fiftieth from Passover, Acts ii. 1.

(a) So styled from religious wisdom and experience, rather than age, chap. xiv. 23. xv. 2, 4, 16, 28. Called also bishops, verse 28. Tit. i. 7, 5. A fine form of necessary leave taking, by a faithful pastor; and fit to copy from. (b) Comp. 1 Thess. ii. 5, 10.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> No wise man will attempt what he believes to be absolutely impossible. Pleasing entertainments must be denied, from regard to views of superior usefulness.

<sup>a</sup> Even great matters ought not to obstruct always courteous

*that foundation grace of the gospel; and (c) temptations from troubles and dangers, scarce to be recounted, which befel me every where, by the (d) lying in wait of the malicious unbelieving Jews to destroy both person and usefulness: and how I kept back by concealment, either from fear or undue love to the world, <sup>b</sup> nothing that was profitable unto you, along with necessary principles and rules, but have shewed you what pertains to the pure unmixed gospel method of salvation, and have <sup>c</sup> taught you the same publicly in your (e) religious meetings, and in a more private way likewise, from house to house as occasions did require, testifying (f) in clear terms, and under the power of an unfeigned earnestness, both to the (g) Jews and also to the (h) Greeks, the undispensable need of repentance toward <sup>d</sup> God, and of cordial living faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as his divine <sup>e</sup> messenger and (i) celestial prince. And now behold, I go up (j) bound in sure foresight by the blessed Spirit of God unto our great capital Jerusalem, not knowing each of the afflictive things that shall befall me there, as to cause;*

(c) See Acts xix. 23, 26. Or trials. (d) See Acts ix. 24. xiv. 2, 5, xx. 3. Conspiracies. (e) See chap. viii. 29. (f) Comp. Luke xvi. 28. Acts xviii. 5. (g) People of God anciently, but now most averse to him. (h) Heathens and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, chap. xviii. 4. xix. 10, 17. (i) See Acts ii. 36. (j) Comp. chap. xiii. 4. Mat. iv. 1. This was the fourth time from his conversion. Things future were set forth to the mind, as though they

#### REFLECTIONS.

salutations, with friendly advice. <sup>b</sup> Humility is the ground work of excellence, and shone with peculiar lustre in our divine Saviour, Eph. iv. 2. Mat. xi. 29. Prayer should be earnest. God permits his best servants often to be awfully tried, Jam. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 6. The lowest in a congregation, ought to be condescended to. <sup>c</sup> In preaching the gospel, we ought neither to seek our own glory, nor secular gain; but with singleness of heart to obey Christ. Even tears of concern are graceful in a faithful pastor. <sup>d</sup> See notes <sup>c</sup>. True repentance implies thorough conversion to God, besides a change of mind from evil to good, Matth. iii. 2, 8. Acts xxvi. 20. Acts ii. 38. <sup>e</sup> Christ is lawgiver and king, is to be trusted in, obeyed, 1 Pet.

manner and consequences : save this most certain general one that the Holy Ghost by inspiration witnesseth (k) in every city through which I am to pass, saying, as with an audible voice, that bonds and (l) afflictions abide me. But 'none of these grievous things move me from duty; neither indeed count I even my own life (m), the last and sweetest comfort upon earth, dear unto myself in comparison, so that I might faithfully finish my (n) course marked out by him whose now it is, with the joy of a conqueror; and the glorious (o) apostolic ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, even to testify with plainness and steadfast fortitude in teaching the glad gospel tidings of the rich (p) grace of God in behalf of mankind. And now, behold, I know by sure celestial revelation, that ye (q) all, among whom I have gone through different countries and cities, preaching the endless kingdom of God (r) to genuine believers, shall see my face no more in this

had been present. (k) See Acts xiii. 2. xxi. 11. (l) Greek, wait for me, verse 5. Where himself had become a furious persecutor, he was to suffer most. (m) Comp. Mat. vi. 25. xvi. 25. John xii. 26. Phil. ii. 30. (n) Like as in public games, 1 Cor. ix. 24. (o) Explains course, see Acts i. 7. vi. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. iv. 7. (p) Forgiveness, eternal life, divine aids, deliverance from an enslaving ritual law. &c. John. i. 17. Rom. vi. 14, 15. (q) Hebraism, for none of you all. (r) See verse 24. Luke xiii. 28. xiv. 15,

#### REFLECTIONS.

i. 21. John xii. 44. Repentance and faith, sum up the Christian doctrine. 'The certain foresight of difficulties must not deter from ministerial duties. Even death itself must be preferred to disobedience. These our tortures, said Justin Martyr to the Roman prefect, will work out our salvation, and obtain confidence to us at the dreadful tribunal of our Lord and Saviour. Such having received might and fortitude, according to the powerful faith that was in them, became the admirable witnesses of his kingdom. *Dion. Bishop of Alex.* They who torture in vain, become ashamed. *ibid.* Through testimony to exalting, God obtains a glorious triumph. *ibid.* This brings to the feast of prophets and martyrs, in that paradise which the Lord hath prepared for those that love him. *Tortuosus, Bishop of Tarracona.* They who are constant in the faith and prepared to suffer, may hope to obtain the crown of everlasting life,

*world. Wherefore, having done as above to the utmost of my power, I take you solemnly to record (s) in the presence of an omniscient God this day<sup>s</sup>, that I am pure from the (t) blood of all men who yet believe not, remain impenitent, or may hereafter apostatize. For I have not shunned in full, free, and steadfast manner, to declare unto you all the (u) counsel of God most high, relative to life everlasting.*

## SECT. XCV. FROM VERSE XXVIII.

*TAKE earnest heed, therefore, as you desire to live and die with comfort, unto yourselves (a) how you believe and act in this matter of prime concern to each of you, and<sup>a</sup> then to all the (b) flock of Christ as I have done, over the which the (c) Holy Ghost in us hath made<sup>b</sup> you (d) overseers, to feed spiritually with what is wholesome,*

(s) I protest before him, Gal v. 3. (t) Blood is generally shed when any one is killed; and to that our apostle alludes, comp. Mat. xxiii. 35. Acts xviii. 6. (u) See Luke vii 30 Eph. i. 11. So men take counsel in affairs to be resolved upon, and executed.

(a) See 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4. iv 16. (b) Comp. John x. 16. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. (c) See Acts xiv. 23. 1 Tim i 20. 2 Tim. i. 6. (d) Greek,

## REFLECTIONS.

through the aid and grace of our Lord. <sup>s</sup> Honest ministers will not share in the blame of those who perish eternally. Pure zeal, is a necessary effect of unfeigned earnest love to God and men, verse 27, 31. We should cheerfully die in our labours, and wear ourselves out in works for piety and virtue, 2 Tim. iv. 7. Rom. v. 8.

<sup>a</sup> The faithful in Christ ought to frequent sacred meetings, and not to separate themselves. They cannot attend to their flocks, who neglect their own spiritual cultivation. It is an awful thought, to be entrusted with precious souls, for whom our divine Redeemer bled and died. Diligence amidst great hazards, is sweet to reflect upon. It is absurd to reject this wise institution, under a pretence, that we have the Holy Ghost to teach us. <sup>b</sup> Vigilance and diligence are necessary to the pastoral office; Acts i. 20. They are not to consult their own, but the interest of their flocks; 1 Cor. i. 2. x. 32. xi. 16. A distinction is proper to be made between an



*and govern with mildness the (e) church of God infinitely wise and good, which he hath purchased (f) for a special possession with his (g) own precious favourite blood. For, besides such weighty reasons (h), by undoubted divine inspiration I know this, that after my departing from you at present, and much more at death, shall grievous (i) cruel wolves<sup>d</sup> enter in subtilly among you, not sparing the flock, but doing all that in them lies (j), by pernicious doctrine, to corrupt, scatter, and destroy. Also even of your own (k) selves in high sacred offices shall men of the above proud factious kind arise, speaking (l) perverse things, to draw away disciples after them from the true knowledge of salvation. Therefore, your danger being so*

Bishops. Metaphor from shepherds, John xxi. 16. (e) Assembly of Christians, for spiritual improvement, Mat. xvi. 18, xviii. 17. Teachers are included. Some M. S. S. have Lord God, others simply Lord. The Syriac has Christ, Rom. xvi. 16 Eph. i. 22, 23. (f) See Eph. i. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 9. (g) Or blood of his own son. (h) See verse 25. xiii. 8. xix. 13, 21. (i) Comp. Jer. v. 6. Hab. i. 8. (j) Comp. Mat. vii. 15. 1 Tim. iv. 1 & 2. 2 Pet. ii. 1, &c. (k) Verse 28. Rev. ii. 6. (l) Doctrines which serve to turn peo-

## REFLECTIONS.

office, and those who administer it; Rom. xiii. 1. Ecclesiastical ministry has clear divine approbation. The bounds of God's word ought, at no time, to be exceeded. What is not clearly revealed, should be left free to others as ourselves. Christ's sheep ought to lack no wholesome food. People will not always have those of most skill and affection among them. To disperse congregations, is the first method which wolves take to ruin them. The origin of all official power in the church is Christ, the supreme head and only law-giver; Eph. iv. 11, 12. Christ, by his blood, obtained power of the Father to collect a church in his name; and to bring them to eternal life: Isa. liii. 10. &c. lv. 1, &c. How great a price! how great the deliverance! Heb. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rev. v. 9. How dear must believers be to God? and how much to be cared for! Even the most false and hurtful teachers must not be persecuted; but wrought upon by argument: 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. From respect to early teachers, both Jewish and Gentile, and a partiality for their tenets; even learned Christians of the early age, did dangerously innovate:

very great<sup>c</sup>, watch, with incessant diligence for your own and the benefit of others, lest so much pains hitherto taken should prove in vain, and remember, that by the space of no less than nigh (m) to three years, from my first coming to Ephesus until now, I ceased not, in like manner, to warn the slothful and wicked of all conditions, night and day without much interruption, and very often with tears of unfeigned love accompanying my earnest endeavours. And now, dear brethren, that I am about to leave this part of the world for ever, to enter upon new scenes of labour and suffering, (n) I commend you all to the good keeping of Almighty God, and to the unspeakable advantages derivable from the word of his gospel grace<sup>e</sup>, which, if carefully attended to under assured divine aids, is able of itself without any mixture or addition to build (o) you up who are sincere in faith and virtue, and to give you an eternal blessed (p) inheritance among all them which are so<sup>s</sup> sanctified in temper and life. I have, you must each of you be sensible, coveted the possession of no man's silver, (q) or gold, or costly apparel, for the sake of carrying forward the duties of my spiritual work. Yea, so far from

ple away from the right road. Abusers for that purpose of apostolical words themselves, see Acts xiii. 8, 10. Mat. xvii. 17. 1 Tim. i. 20. 1 John ii. 18, 19. Many worse still there were, after the decease of the apostles. Pretended apostolical traditions did much harm. (m) See chap. xviii. 19. xix. 1. c. (n) Or I commend you to God, by the word of his grace. (o) See Eph. ii. 20. Jude 20. (p) Greek, Lot, possession, see 1 Pet. i. 4. Eph. i. 14, 18. (q) Comp. 1 Sam.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> Pastors ought at no time, if possible, to be from off their guard. <sup>e</sup> Of all righteousness, God is the principal, and his word the instrumental cause; 2 Tim. iii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 4. <sup>s</sup> Heaven is the native country of the religious; and to none other is it given to be partakers thereof. Mart in Pal. Acts xxvii. 18. Eph. i. 18. The holy scriptures ought to be written in a pure soul, and in the clearest light of the understanding, to subserve religious virtue. True Christian heroism leads to exalted sentiments and language; 1 Pet. v. 2. Friendships are acquired more by giving, than receiving benefits. Eager overbearing tempers are highly grievous, even though destitute of

mean secular designs in preaching the gospel, ye yourselves who act as bishops in and about Ephesus, as do all your flocks, know that these my stretched out hands have ministered unto my necessities of food and clothing, and to the support of them likewise in a great measure<sup>n</sup> that were companions (r) with me. I have thus shewed you, by my example as well as words, all things for imitation (s), how that so labouring hard (t) when need is, ye ought to support the weak (u) from falling, by a kind outstretched arm; and, as a persuasive, or argument, to remember the generous favourite words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself frequently said, and did prove<sup>k</sup> the same by his whole conduct (x). It is more honourable and blessed both to give from right principle, than even gratefully to receive.

xii. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 12, 15, 18. (n) See verse 4. comp. chap. xviii. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 8. (r) Comp. 1 Cor. x. 33. Eph. iv. 15. (t) See 1 Cor. iv. 12. (u) Such are in greatest danger, Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 1. (x) An apostrophe of signal excellence, and which, though not upon record, he might have often used.

## REFLECTIONS.

secular power. <sup>b</sup> To make expence as easy as possible to those who are taught, seems to be the duty of pious and learned teachers. The more selfish people are, the less regard in common they have for truth and usefulness. Their liberalities, at times, may be considerably stretched, nor, upon the whole, is this often found to be great loss. Whatever we undertake for the good of others, ought to be accomplished, though with indefatigable pains of alacrity. Active virtues bear no resemblance to the solitary and contemplative life of a recluse. The weak, who are apt to be suspicious of selfish designs in others, ought not to be despised. <sup>k</sup> Sure communicative love, must be peculiarly acceptable to Christ. To give, is a sign of virtue; to receive, is a sign of necessity and desire; the former has promise of great reward; the latter, unless with some very pious circumstances, none, comp. 1 Cor. ix. 14. 1. Tim. v. 17, 18. Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9. 1 Tim. vi. 19. To find one's self eminently useful even to late posterity, must be a delightful employment. God delighteth more in such deeds, than in the steam of blood of burnt-offerings. Mart. in Pal.

## SECT. XCVI. FROM VERSE XXXVI.

AND when he had thus spoken *for advice and warning*, he *humbly*<sup>a</sup> kneeled down *upon the earth*, and, in  *fervent affectionate manner*, prayed with them all *for mercy and success to the glory of God, and their eternal benefit*. And they all (*as indeed who could have refrained?*) wept sore *at the thoughts of his departure*,<sup>b</sup> and, in testimony of their upright love, fell on Paul's (a) neck, and kissed him *with the utmost concern*. Sorrowing (b) most of all for the sad words which he spake, <sup>c</sup> that they should see his face *who had been so eminently serviceable to them no more on earth*. And, for beholding and conversing with him as long as possible, they accompanied him to the ship.

## C H A P. XXI.

## SECT. XCVII. FROM VERSE I.

AND it came to pass, that after we (a) *had parted with the bishops of Ephesus in so reluctant and tender*

(a) Comp. Gen. xlv. 14. xvi. 30. (b) Greek, with much pain, comp. 1 Kings viii. 45. Dan. vi. 10. Luke xxii. 41.

(a). Paul and his companions, under great grief, xvi. 2. (b) The next

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> External signs of reverence and submission to the Almighty, are highly proper; in our last prayers especially, it becometh us to remember the universal church, spread from the east to the west. *Fruentius bishop of Terracona*. And again, immediately before his execution, "There will not be wanting a Pastor among you, for the loving kindness and covenant of the Lord shall never fail: and that which ye now behold, seemeth but as the tribulation of one hour." The words of dying people, may be admitted as a pledge of their sincerity <sup>b</sup> To dear friends, separation is an extreme trial. <sup>c</sup> Distinct and consolatory preachers removed, are a severe loss to their flocks.

a manner, were now gotten off from them, and had launched out our vessel, we came with a straight course unto the (b) island Coos, and the day following unto that of (c) Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara of Lycia. And finding a ship there just about sailing unto (d) Phenicia, we went aboard her, and set forth. Now when we had discovered the long island (e) Cyprus, we left it on the left hand by the southern coast, and sailed into Syria belonging to Asia the (f) Greater, and landed at the rich trading city of (g) Tyre; for there he who took care of the ship was to unlade her burden of goods. And finding in this place Christian (h) disciples, we tarried there for mutual joy and conversation seven days: who said to Paul, certain of them, through the knowledge of future events communicated by a divine spirit, that he should not in their humble opinion (i) go up to Jerusalem, where so great danger to his freedom and safety did await him. And when he had accomplished among such pious affectionate friends those (j) days, we departed from Tyre, and went our way towards the capital; and they all kindly brought us on our way, with their wives and children, till we were quite out of the city, and then we (k) knelt down on the

the Cyclades, and famous for the worship of Esculapius: the birth place of Hippocrates, chief of the physicians, and Apelles, of the painters. Situated in the Archipelago near the south west coast of Lesser Asia, 30 miles north west of the isle of Rhodes. (c) In which was the grand Colossus, or statue erected to Apollo, made of brass, 105 feet high, one of the seven wonders of the world. An island in the Mediterranean sea 20 miles south west of the Lesser Asia. (d) A country of Syria, chap. xi. 19. wherein were the celebrated cities of Sidon and Tyre. Hence came the Carthaginians. (e) Of which see chap. iv. 36. xiii. 4. (f) And whereof Canaan was a part. (g) See Isa. xxvii. 22-k. xxvii. Called in Hebrew Zor, anciently Sarc. It is now only inhabited by a few poor fishermen, comp. Ezek. xxvi. 14. Maundrel. (h) See chap xi. 19, 20. The same as brethren, chap. ix. 26 xi 29. (i) This they said out of love, and by no command of the Spirit. (j) See verse 4. (k) See chap.

## REFLECTIONS.

Having a clear order of God, true Christian fortitude can-

shore and prayed both for their welfare and our future success. And when we had taken our (l) affectionate leave one of another, we who were to go farther took ship, and they of this place returned, each to their proper home again. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to (m) Ptolemais on the coast of Canaan, and saluted the Christian brethren of this city, and abode with them for pious converse, as well as ease to our fatigue, one day. And the next day after leaving Ptolemais, we that were of Paul's company departed thence, and came by land in progress of (n) time, to Cesarea, upon the Mediterranean shore, and we entered into the house of (o) Philip the preaching evangelist, (which was before this one of the (p) seven deacons), and abode with him as his guest.

#### SECT. XXVIII. FROM VERSE IX.

AND the same man with whom we abode, had four daughters, then virgins, which by a divine spirit did prophesy things (a) future, as well as past. And as we tarried there many days in Cesarea, for (b) refreshment and mutual consolation, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named (c) Agabus. And when

xx. 36. xvi. 13. (l) Comp. chap. xx. (m) Named from Ptolemy a king of Egypt, who reigned it. Anciently Acto, Jud. i. 31. And so the Syriac here. A part of Cilicia, situated on the Levant coast, 20 miles south west of Tyre. Now Aca, Acra. (n) That must have been a journey of some few days. One of the finest cities in Judea, adorned by Herod; and general residence of the Roman governor. (o) See chap. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 5. (p) Chap. vi. 5. Now promoted to higher office, and not limited to any place

(a) So Jude iv. 4. 2 Kings xxii. 14. Luke ii. 36. There was fulfilled, Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17, &c. (b) See chap. xi. 28, 29. (c) Isa:

#### REFLECTIONS.

not decline duty, be the prospects ever so threatening. <sup>b</sup> Mutual Christian conversion, is of great use, and very rejoicing.

<sup>a</sup> The celebacy of the clergy was not enjoined, nor thought a duty, in that truly primitive and apostolic age. Where con-

he was come unto us, he took up Paul's girdle from about his upper garments, and, ~~expressing~~ *expressing* himself by action after the well known manner of the (c) ancients, bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus faith in me (d) the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth (e) this girdle, and shall deliver him a prisoner into the hands of the idolatrous (f) Gentiles. And, when we, the companions of that blessed apostle, heard these things, both we and they of like precious faith with us in that place (g) besought him earnestly, for his own and the public good together, not at this time to go <sup>b</sup> up to Jerusalem. Then Paul firmly answered to our intreaties, What mean ye (h) to weep under such tender affection, and in return as it were to break <sup>c</sup> my very grateful heart in pieces? For I am ready prepared, through grace, not to be bound as a malefactor only, but also, if need be (i), to die by like persecuting hands <sup>d</sup> at Jerusalem for the name (j), honour, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded by our arguments from his determined purpose, we

xx. 2, 3. Jer. liii. 1, 4. xlv. 2. (c) Comp. chap. xiii. 2. This was the voice of *God's* inspiration. (d) Of *owns*, comp. John xxi. 16. Mat. xi. 19. (e) Fulfilled, verse 23. (f) See Mark xi. 5. (h) So Greek, metaphor, like Luke iv. 18. Or pulling the heart different ways. (i) See chap. xx. 16, 24. Dan. iii. 18. (j) Comp. John ii. 23. viii. 18. Acts ix. 15. More was revealed

## REFLECTIONS.

science pleads, no solicitations are to be regarded; no troubles to be declined; Phil. 12. Acts xxiii. 33. Luke xxii. 42. <sup>b</sup> A land of ceremonies, and a land of inquisition, is no proper place of safety for the open and free. They are the happiest of all people, who seek not after great worldly things. He who is prepared for either life or death will not be afraid even when brought into the presence of a tyrant. <sup>c</sup> Hearty obedience, in the view of great sufferings, argues the most perfect fortitude. To be ready for a state of future bliss, we should have proper elevated ideas thereof. This was a generous contest from pure zeal; and argued a spirit more than human, *Mart. in Pal.* Thus did Paul move forward to death, in the guise of a victorious champion, *Ibid.* <sup>d</sup> To change from the better to what is worse is impossible with true believers; but

very great<sup>c</sup>, watch, with incessant diligence for your own and the benefit of others, lest so much pains hitherto taken should prove in vain, and remember, that by the space of no less than nigh (m) to three years, from my first coming to Ephesus until now, I ceased not, in like manner, to warn the slothful and wicked of all conditions, night and day without much interruption, and very often with tears of unfeigned love accompanying my earnest endeavours. And now, dear brethren, that I am about to leave this part of the world for ever, to enter upon new scenes of labour and suffering, (n) I commend you all to the good keeping of Almighty God, and to the unspeakable advantages derivable from the word of his gospel grace<sup>f</sup>, which, if carefully attended to under assured divine aids, is able of itself without any mixture or addition to build (o) you up who are sincere in faith and virtue, and to give you an eternal blessed (p) inheritance among all them which are so<sup>g</sup> sanctified in temper and life. I have, you must each of you be sensible, coveted the possession of no man's silver, (q) or gold, or costly apparel, for the sake of carrying forward the duties of my spiritual work. Yea, so far from

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xiii 3. 1 Cor. ix. 12, 15, 18. (r) See verse 4. comp. chap. xviii. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 8. (s) Comp. 1 Cor. x. 33. Eph. iv. 15. (t) See 1 Cor. iv. 12. (u) Such are in greatest danger, Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 1. (x) An apothegm of signal excellence, and which, though not upon record, he might have often used.

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## SECT. XCVI. FROM VERSE XXXVI.

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## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> External signs of reverence and submission to the Almighty, are highly proper; in our last prayers especially, it becometh us to remember the universal church, spread from the east to the west. *Flavianus bishop of Terracona.* And again, immediately before his execution; "These will not be wanting a Pastor among you, for the loving kindness and covenant of the Lord shall never fail: and that which ye now behold, seemeth but as the tribulation of one hour." The words of dying people, may be admitted as a pledge of their sincerity <sup>b</sup> To dear friends, separation is an extreme trial. <sup>c</sup> Distinct and consolatory preachers removed, are a severe loss to their flocks.

*a manner, were now gotten off from them, and had launched out our vessel, we came with a straight course unto the (b) island Cops, and the day following unto that of (c) Rhoddes, and from thence unto Patara of Lycia. And finding a ship there just about sailing unto (d) Phenicia we went aboard her, and set forth. Now when we had discovered the long island (e) Cyprus, we left it on the left hand by the southern coast, and sailed into Syria belonging to Asia the (f) Greater, and landed at the rich trading city of (g) Tyre; for there he who took care of the ship was to unlade her burden of goods. And finding in this place Christian (h) disciples, we tarried there for mutual joy and conversation seven days: who said to Paul, certain of them, through the knowledge of future events communicated by a divine spirit, that he should not in their humble opinion (i) go up to Jerusalem, where so great danger to his freedom and safety did await him. And <sup>a</sup> when he had accomplished among such pious affectionate friends those (j) days, we departed from Tyre, and went our way towards the capital; and they all kindly brought us on our way, with their wives and children, till we were quite out of the city, and then we (k) knelt down on the*

the Cyclades, and famous for the worship of Esculapius: the birth place of Hippocrates, chief of the physicians, and Apelles, of the painters. Situated in the Archipelago near the south west coast of Lesser Asia, 30 miles north west of the Isle of Rhodes. (c) In which was the grand Colossus, or statue erected to Apollo, made of brass, 105 feet high, one of the seven wonders of the world. An island in the Mediterranean sea 20 miles south west of the Lesser Asia. (d) A country of Syria, chap. xi. 19. wherein were the celebrated cities of Sidon and Tyre. Hence came the Carthaginians. (e) Of which see chap. iv. 26. xiii. 4. (f) And whereof Canaan was a part. (g) See Isa. xxiii. Ezek. xxvii. Called in Hebrew Zor, anciently Sarra. It is now only inhabited by a few poor fishermen, comp. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Maundrel. (h) See chap xi. 19, 20. The same as brethren, chap. ix. 26 xi 29. (i) This they said out of love, and by no command of the Spirit. (j) See verse 4. (k) See chap.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Having a clear order of God, true Christian fortitude can-

shore and prayed *both for their welfare and our future success*. And when we had taken our *(l)* affectionate leave one of another, we *who were to go farther* took ship, and they *of this place* returned, *each to their proper* home again. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to *(m)* Ptolemais *on the coast of Canaan*, and saluted the *Christian* brethren of this city, and abode with them *for pious converse, as well as ease to our fatigue*, one day. And the next day after leaving Ptolemais, we that were of Paul's company departed thence, and came by land in progress of *(n)* time to Cesarea, upon the *Mediterranean shore*; and we entered into the house of *(o)* Philip the *preaching evangelist*, (which was before this one of the *(p)* seven deacons) and abode with him as *his guest*.

#### SECT. XCVIII FROM VERSE IX.

AND the same man *with whom we abode*, had four daughters, *then virgins*, <sup>a</sup> which *by a divine spirit* did prophesy *things (a) future, as well as teach*. And as we tarried there *many days in Cesarea*, <sup>for</sup> *(b) refreshment and mutual consolation*, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named *(c)* Agabus. And when

xx. 36. xvi. 13. *(l)* Comp. chap. xx. 1. *(m)* Named from Ptolemy a king of Egypt, who reigned it. Anciently Azoto, Jud. i. 31. And so the Syriac here. A part of Cilicia, situated on the Levant coast, 20 miles south west of Tyre. Now Acca, or Acra. *(n)* That must have been a journey of some few days. One of the finest cities in Judea, adorned by Herod; and general residence of the Roman governor. *(o)* See chap. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 5. *(p)* Chap. vi. 5. Now promoted to higher office, and not limited to any place.

*(a)* So Jude iv. 4. 2 Kings xxii. 14. Luke ii. 36. Then was fulfilled, Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17, &c. *(b)* See chap. xi. 28, 29. *(c)* Hag.

#### REFLECTIONS.

not decline duty, be the prospects ever so threatening. <sup>b</sup> Mutual Christian conversion, is of great use, and very rejoicing.

<sup>a</sup> The celebacy of the clergy was not enjoined, nor thought a duty, in that truly primitive and apostolic age. Where con-



he was come unto us, he took up Paul's girdle from about his upper garments, and expressing himself by action after the well known manner of the (c) ancients, bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus faith in me (d) the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that oweth (e) this girdle, and shall deliver him a prisoner into the hands of the idolatrous (f) Gentiles. And, when we, the companions of that blessed apostle, heard these things, both we and they of like precious faith with us in that place (g) besought him earnestly, for his own and the public good together, not at this time to go <sup>b</sup> up to Jerusalem. Then Paul firmly answered to our intreaties, What mean ye (h) to weep under such tender affection, and in return as it were to break <sup>c</sup> my very grateful heart in pieces? For I am ready prepared, through grace, not to be bound as a malefactor only, but also, if need be (i), to die by like persecuting hands <sup>d</sup> at Jerusalem for the name (j), honour, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded by our arguments from his determined purpose, we

xx. 2. 3. Jer. lli. 1. 4. xvii. 2. (c) Comp. chap. xiii. 2. This was the voice of God by inspiration. (d) Or owns, comp. John xiv. 10. Mat. xi. 19. (e) Fulfilled, verse 23. (f) See Mark vi. 5. (g) So Greek, metaphor, like Luke iv. 18. Or pulling the heart different ways. (h) See chap. xx. 16, 24. Dan. iii. 18. (i) Comp. John ii. 23. viii. 18. Acts ix. 15. More was revealed

#### REFLECTIONS.

science pleads, no solicitations are to be regarded; no troubles to be declined; Phil. 12. Acts xxiii. 33. Luke xxii. 42. <sup>b</sup> A land of ceremonies, and a land of inquisition, is no proper place of safety for the open and free. They are the happiest of all people, who seek not after great worldly things. He who is prepared for either life or death will not be afraid even when brought into the presence of a tyrant. <sup>c</sup> Hearty obedience, in the view of great sufferings, argues the most perfect fortitude. To be ready for a state of future bliss, we should have proper elevated ideas thereof. This was a generous contest from pure zeal, and argued a spirit more than human, Mart. in Pal. Thus did Paul move forward to death, in the guise of a victorious champion, Ibid. <sup>d</sup> To change from the better to what is worse is impossible with true believers; but

ceased to urge the matter any further, saying<sup>c</sup>, The good will of the (k) Lord be done.

#### SECT. XCIX. FROM VERSE XV.

AND after those days *spent at Cesarea*, we took up our carriages, *with necessary victuals and raiment*, and went up (a) *as expeditionly as might be* to Jerusalem, the capital. There went with us also certain of the *Christian* disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason, of the island Cyprus, *who had been occasionally there*, an<sup>a</sup> old confirmed disciple (b), with whom, *when at the end of our journey*, we should lodge as his guests, during the solemn Pentecost-feast. And when they were (c) come to Jerusalem, the believing brethren there received us into their communion and worship gladly.

#### SECT. C. FROM VERSE XVIII.

AND the day following, Paul went in with us *who had long accompanied him* unto (a) James the Less, son of

to Paul than even to Agabus, chap. xix. 21. (k) Comp. Mat. xxvi. 42.

(a) Simply for going, as in Gen. xxxv. 1. xlv. 9. (b) He might have heard Jesus himself preach. They had not then inns and such accommodations for strangers and travellers as we have now; and it would be difficult then to get a convenient lodging at Jerusalem, comp. chap. xiii. 4. (c) A like expression; as in Mark vi. 2. John vi. 21.

(a) Chief of the church at Jerusalem, chap. x. 17. xv. 13. Peter and other apostles might be absent upon their master's work

#### REFLECTIONS.

to change from evil to good, that is excellent, *Ibid.* <sup>c</sup> The devout most wisely ascribe whatever befalleth to the will of God. *Mart. of Smyrna.* Such fortitude and constancy is well adapted to strengthen feeble minds, *Ibid.* Afflictions of the good, are over-ruled to general advantage.

<sup>a</sup> An old disciple is an honourable title; Job. xxxii. 7. The last vigour of nature is most fitly spent in the service of Christ; offices of cordial love, and generous friendship.

*A'pheus*; and all the (b) elders of special authority from their distinguished knowledge were present to give us their affectionate welcome. And, when he had saluted them with a tender embrace, he declared particularly, in order and at length, what gracious things a merciful God <sup>a</sup> had wrought among the Gentiles, who till then were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, by means of (d) his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and said unto him who did communicate those glad tidings, Thou see'st, beloved <sup>b</sup> brother *Paul*, how many (e) thousands <sup>c</sup> of Jews there are collected from different parts to celebrate the feast, which believe the divine Saviour and his gospel, and they are all, as yet, zealous of observing the (f) ritual Mosaic law. And they are informed of thee from manifold reports, that thou teachest all the Jews which are living among the Gentiles to (g) forsake Moses <sup>d</sup> in effect, now and for ever, saying, That they ought not to circumcise their (h) male children, neither bind themselves by this initiatory rite to walk (i) after the other legal customs. What is it therefore (j) you ought to do? the multitude must

elsewhere. (b) A kind of ecclesiastical senators; but more from their pious advancement than age, see chap. xi. 23. xv. 6, 22, 23. (c) So Greek, comp. Rom. xv. 31. (d) In Macedonia, Greece, Athens, Achaia, Corinth, &c. chapters xvi. xvii. xviii. xix. (e) Greek, myriads. Besides those in Acts ii. 41. iv. 4. Many there were without the city Jerusalem. (f) See Rom. x. 2. Gal. i. 14. This warm attachment to the shadow, did continue till Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and the Nazarenes still longer. (g) Comp. Jer. xxix. 32. (h) This he did not yet plainly, but rather did accommodate himself to such, Acts xvi. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 20. (i) Live, Mark vii. 5. Rom. vi. 4. viii. 1. (j) Or which

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> God, in all good things, is to be owned. What adds to his glorious praise, is a chief joy to his true servants. <sup>b</sup> Endearing methods are ever proper to engage attention. <sup>c</sup> Multitudes under unessential mistakes, are neither to be despised nor offended. So great a number of Jewish converts affords a valuable testimony of the gospel. <sup>d</sup> Mosaic ceremonies are rendered quite unnecessary by what Christ hath done. The gospel is not the abrogation of the law properly, but the ful-

needs come together *from all parts hither out of curiosity and fondness*: for they will soon hear that thou art come to *Jerusalem, and watch thy conduct narrowly*. Do, therefore, this to prevent giving unnecessary offence, that we now<sup>e</sup> say to thee; We have four men among us *Christians, with a strict Nazarite vow (k) on them*; them take into your society, and purify thyself by suitable ritual observances with them, and be at charges of necessary sacrifices with them, that they may be at liberty afterwards to have their heads before admission into the tabernacle: that all men may know that those things whereof in so great a measure they were informed concerning thee are nothing such as report would make them, and that thou thyself walkest orderly (l), and still keepst the law of Moses. As touching the Gentiles which believe in Christ, there is no ground to be afraid of their displeasure from the above proposal, for we have already written and decreed (m) in a solemn apostolical council, that they are under divine command to observe no such things, (n) in order to their eternal salvation, save only that they keep themselves from (o) eating things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled animals, and from fornication. Then the great good Paul, who readily became all things to all men, as far as he could, consenting, took the men who had engaged, and the very next day purifying himself as the law directs, together with them, (p) entered into the sacred temple of Jerusalem, to signify in presence of both priests and people the complete accomplishment of the statuted days (q) of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them in their turns. And when the seven days<sup>f</sup>, agreeable to custom, were

may not be apprehended on such an occasion. (k) See Num. vi. 25. Acts xiii. 18. xxiv. 18. Zealous persons used to be at part or the whole charge, though the expence was considerable, see Joseph. Ant. l. xix. c. 6. Sect. 1. This was common and popular. (l) Providence was soon to render these practices impossible, Heb. viii. 13. (m) Comp. chap. xv. 20, 23, 30 (n) See Acts xv. 1, 5. (o) Comp. Acts xv. 29. (p) See verse 24. (q) Comp.

#### REFLECTIONS.

filment of it. <sup>e</sup> See note <sup>e</sup>. <sup>f</sup> Malice is so suspicious and



(*r*) almost ended by proper sacrifices, the Jews which were of (*s*) Asia, and had come to celebrate the Pentecost-fest, when they saw him about to worship in the temple, stirred up all the people to wrath, and laid violent hands on him, crying out bitterly, O men of Israel (*t*), help the cause of justice till so gross an offender be punished: This is the hateful man that teacheth all men every where against the Jewish people, and the (*u*) most unquestionable law of God, and the peculiar sanctity of this place: and further, heinously aggravating his crimes, he has even brought profane Greeks also into the temple, and hath thereby miserably (*x*) polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him, familiarly conversing in the city (*y*), Trophimus, known to be an Ephesian and uncircumcised, whom they likewise rashly supposed<sup>s</sup> that Paul had brought into the temple.) And

Num. vi. 13, 14, 15. (*r*) Some, about to be ended, or in the way towards it, comp chap. xxi. 18, 26. xxii. 30. (*s*) Possibly from Ephesus comp. Acts xix. 9. xx. 3, 31. (*t*) Now was verse 20, 21. fulfilled, see chap. xix. 29. (*u*) Comp. chap. xvi. 13 xvii. 6. (*x*) Made common, Matth. xv. 11, 18, 20. Acts x. 15. No foreigner must enter here, was written on the separating wall, between the outer and inner court, Josephus, Eph. ii. 19. (*y*) See

#### REFLECTIONS.

blind, as to confound the cause of one man with another, even where they have no connection. The Jewish Christians would have thought him highly culpable if he had not done so. Our Lord himself bore with prejudices and instilled truths into mens' minds no faster than they could receive them. The most prudent upright people in the world may be mistaken, or misrepresented. We ought never to believe on the credit of a noisy rabble. Unless religion be concerned unheard, it cannot be condemned at all. <sup>s</sup> Precaution ought ever to comport with the strictest integrity; Rom xiv. 19. Well would it have fared with humanity and our common faith, if all men had, in matters of doubtful and unimportant disputation, imitated such a yielding example. The Christian institution does not require a weak and peevish singularity: there is an obvious medium between enforcing things as necessary and condemning them as unlawful; comp. Rom. xiv. 14. Eph. ii. 14, 15. Genuine piety is humble and benevolent. <sup>h</sup> God

all the city (z), by such clamorous noise, was moved to an extreme degree, and the people incessantly ran together; and they took Paul, the ring-leader, and drew him out of the temple to destroy him: and forthwith, lest part of his blood might pollute its sacred pavement, or other impure Gentiles enter, the doors were close shut by the Levite officers. And, as they went about to kill him cruelly and unheard, tidings of this much enraged mob, came unto the chief captain of the (a) temple-band, that all Jerusalem was in a dangerous uproar<sup>b</sup>: who immediately took soldiers and centurions (b) to give command, and ran down with speed unto them from the castle (c) for suppressing the riot: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers thus come to quell the tumult, they left beating of Paul as they had begun. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, who had given occasion, though innocently, to the mob, out of Jewish hands, and, to appease them in part, commanded him to be bound in their sight with (d) two chains; and next, demanded who he was, and what he had done to provoke them? And, as ever happens in cases of this sort, some cried one foolish thing (e), and some another, among the rash imprudent multitude: and, when he could not know the certainty for the hideous inconsistent tumult, he commanded him to be carried by his subalterns into the castle (f) where his Roman guard was kept. And when he came upon the nighest stairs which led thither (g), so it was that he did not walk

chap. xx. 4. (z) Comp. verse 28. (a) Greek, commander of a thousand, see John xviii. 3, 11. Or tribune of a cohort. This legion for guarding the temple, lodged in the castle Antonia. (b) Having an hundred under them. (c) See verse 34. (d) One for his hands and another for his feet, comp. verse 11. chap. xii. 6, 7. A beathen is made use of, to defend and snatch this faithful servant of God, from being destroyed by religious professors. (e) See chap. xix. 32. (f) Named Antonia, in honour of Anthony; and built by Herod. (g) There was a number of them. *Jeseph.*

#### REFLECTIONS.

can raise up guardians to religion, from the most unexpected quarter! Let us adore providence, and pursue our duty with

*but was borne up in a sort of the soldiers for the violence of the encompassing people. For the multitude of the unthinking barbarous people followed close still after, crying, in the fierceness of their anger, Away with him out of life, and let not the world be longer troubled with such a wretch. And as Paul was just about to be led from off the stair-head into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I be allowed (b), sir, to speak unto thee for my defence and in very few words? Who said, in some surprise, Canst thou indeed speak Greek (i)? Art not thou, as certain of this people have declared, that base Egyptian which some little while before (j) these days madest an hideous uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness no less than four thousand men (k) on pretext of freedom, and that were absolute murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, and not the Egyptian you have mentioned, a city of Cilicia, (l) a citizen, therefore, of no mean city, if you consider either grandeur, antiquity, or fame for the liberal arts: and, I now beseech thee, sir, suffer me to speak from hence unto the people, for evincing my innocence, and how great wrong they have done. And, when he had given him licence for those ends, Paul stood on the stairs, where he could be both well seen and heard, and beckoned with the hand (m) unto the clamorous people: and when there was made, by this means, a great silence (n), he spake*

(b) Comp. Mark xv. 44. Luke xxii. 49. A preface full of respect.  
 (i) See Neh. xiii. 24. (j) Under the president Felix. (k) Comp. Mat. xxiv. 26. They increased to near 30,000; and were led by the Mount of Olives nigh to Jerusalem, where they were assured that the walls of the city would fall down before them. They were routed by Felix with considerable slaughter. *Joseph. Ant.* l. xx. B. *Jud.* l. ii. They carried short swords, for killing by surprise; hence probably called Sicarii. (l) See chap. xxii. 28. ix. 11, 30. (m) Comp. chap. xii. 17. xiii. 19. (n) So chap. xii. 17. With licence given to speak; the chains might be taken from off his

#### REFLECTIONS.

courage. <sup>1</sup> A brave man restrains the cowardly insults of the populace and preserves order. Even the judgement of zeal must not be pled to justify murder.

unto them, *at some length*, in the Hebrew (a) tongue, saying,

## CHAP. XXII.

### SECT. CI. FROM VERSE I

**M**EN of my own dear country<sup>a</sup>, brethren, and fathers, by descent from the same holy patriarchs, and on each of these accounts objects of sincere (a) tender love, hear ye with patient regard my defence which I would make now unto you, against the late accusation of Asiatic Jews. (And when they heard that he spake thus far in the vulgar Hebrew (b) tongue to them, they, though numerous, kept the more silence: and he saith on as follows :) I am, verily, a man which am known to be a Jew (c) of the common stock with yourselves, born in Tarsus, a chief city (d) in the neighbouring province of Cilicia, yet by pious parents brought up at considerable expence, with other students from my youth, in this very city (e), at the feet of well known (f) rabbi Gamaliel, and taught by him according to the perfect manner of the law of the ancient fathers (g) with all their unwritten traditions, and was even (h) zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted to the utmost of my power this way of Jesus in its open ad-

hands: (e) Thus he would be most generally understood.

(a) See chap. vii. 2: Fathers might be added, for the sake of rulers present. (b) Comp. chap. xxi. 40. The Syro Chaldaic Original Hebrew was not commonly understood in Judea, at this time. (c) See Phil. iii. 5. (d) See chap. xxi. 39. (e) Or his daily hearers. So scholars were in use to sit upon mats laid around the master's chair, see Luke iv. 20. x. 39. (f) One of the strictest sect, chap. v. 34. see last note. (g) Comp. Gal. i. 14. Acts xxvi. 5. (h) Fervent in practice and exactness from others, chap. xxi. 20.

### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> To provoke attention and good will, is the way to be of

*herents (i) unto the death, binding with that view, and delivering, by powers obtained, into prisons<sup>b</sup> both men and women of every rank and quality. As also the high priest himself doth<sup>c</sup> bear me witness (j), if you shall ask, and all the subordinated estate of the senatorial elders: from whom also some years since, I received letters of commission unto the Jewish brethren, and went on the road to Damascus the capital of Syria, with resolute purpose to bring them which were professors of the Christian religion there bound as criminals unto Jerusalem for to be punished with stripes, in the most solemn and exemplary manner. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey thither, and was come nigh unto the execution of my own warm but ill directed zeal in Damascus, about high noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a (k) great light, surpassing that of the sun, round about me. And I fell (l) in the utmost terror of amazement unto the paved ground, and then heard a voice distinctly saying unto me (m), Saul, Saul, why thus cruelly persecutest thou me? And I, being well acquainted with the Hebrew language, answered, as I was able, who art thou (n), Lord? And he instantly said unto me, I am Jesus of*

xxvi. 5. (i) See chap. ix. 2. xviii. 25, 26. (j) Comp. Matth. xxvi. 59. Acts ix. 1, 2. (k) Greek, sufficient, copious; like Lu. vii. 11. 12. Acts xiv. 21. comp. Acts xxvi. 13. (l) See chap. ix. 4. (m) Mark of great concern. (n) A title of honour. He might

#### REFLECTIONS.

service in discourse. <sup>b</sup> Those persecutions which shew no respect to either age or sex, are the most furious, chap. viii. 3. ix. 2. Unsanctified learning makes bonds strong, by furnishing specious arguments of opposition. When sanctified, it becomes gloriously instrumental of good. <sup>c</sup> He comes out of the world with all the warmth of his own natural temper, the fire of the academy, and the zeal and bigotry of a pupil to the pharisaic doctors, comp. Acts vii. 58. Yet all this tends only to disperse believers, and spread Christianity the more. When religious sects quarrel for any time, almost every thing widens the breach. They who have obtained mercy, should make it their care often to recollect particulars, comp. 1 Tim. i. 16.

(o) Nazareth whom thou persecutest in my beloved people. And they that were attending with me as companions and servants, saw indeed the resplendent light, and were fore (p) afraid; but they heard (q) not in an articulate manner the voice of him that spake so awfully and intelligibly to me. And I, surrendering to him at discretion, said, What shall I henceforth do, Lord, to obtain forgiveness<sup>d</sup>? And the great good Lord said unto me. Arise from the earth, and go, make out thy journey into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things (r) which are appointed for thee to do in my cause. And when I could not see for the overpowering (s) glory of that heavenly light which had struck direct upon me, being led by the hand of them that were in company with me, I came, under great change of mind and purpose, into Damascus. And one Ananias (t), who believed in Jesus, a devout man, at the same time, according to the law of Moses, having a good report (u) for his knowledge and virtue of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, soon after my arrival, and (x) stood, to be seen by others, and said unto me, both in their and my hearing, Dear Christian brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same moment of that hour I looked upon him. And he said, under heavenly direction, The God of our patriarchal Jewish fathers hath (y) chosen thee for instant service, that thou shouldest know his will more at large than ever, and see that eminently just One, (z) whom thou didst hate and persecute,

suppose the speaker to have been an angel, chap. ix. 5. (o) Usually so termed of the Jews, from contempt. (p) Comp. Dan. x. 7. (q) No contradiction therefore to chap. ix. 7. similar to John xii. 29 comp. Gen. xi. 7. (r) Partly fulfilled by Ananias, and partly by visions and immediate revelations to himself. (s) Comp. Lu. ii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41. 2 Cor. iii. 7. (t) See chap. ix. 10. (u) Like chap. vi. 3 x. 22. xvi. 2. He was one who could not seduce, or be seduced. (x) See chap. ix. 17. Luke iv. 29. (y) Greek, taken thee up as it were, in his hands, comp Acts ix. 15 xxvi. 16. A most prudent choice of epithet. (z) The Messiah, chap. iii. 14.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>d</sup> Tender expostulations of mercy, are fitted to soften, Job.

and shouldest obediently, in all time coming, hear doctrine from the voice of his own blessed mouth. For, in place of continuing an opposer, thou shalt in time coming, be his steadfast witness unto all men (a) whatever, of what thou hast seen relative to the great exalted Messiah, and likewise heard. And now, why tarriest thou? arise with speed, and be baptized in public manifestation of thy faith, and thus (b) wash away thy former sins, calling then and afterwards, on the name of the Lord Jesus (c) for every needful succour. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again from Damascus and Arabia (d) to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the holy (e) temple I was put by God in a trance (f), with all my bodily senses fast locked up; and saw him by clear discernment to my mind, saying unto me, Make haste hence, to preach elsewhere, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem altogether: for they whom you seek to save<sup>e</sup>, looking upon you

vii. 52. Psal. xlv 8 Isa liii. 11. If Saul had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus, he still wanted the necessary apostolical qualification of seeing and hearing from him more at large, comp 2 Co, xii 1, &c. (a) See chap. xxvi. 17, 18 (b) Or be thou washed Syr. Arab. Have the outward sign thereof, Acts ii. 38. xiii. 24. (c) Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Comprehends faith, profession, and obedience, Acts ii. 21. 36. Rom. x. 12, 13. (d) Chap ix. 26. (e) See Mat. xxi. 13. Acts ix. 10. xviii. 9. (f) Comp. Acts x. 10. Not the

## REFLECTIONS.

xxii. 22. \* To desire the spiritual benefit of those whom we have formerly hurt by a bad example, is essential to genuine repentance. Force of argument enrages some, and even hardens, Acts v. 28. Causes of ignorance, like Paul's, are very pitiable. Christ would have him wait till he should be delivered up, even as himself was; so Polycarp. This is true steadfast brotherly kindness, if we seek that all the brethren together with us may be saved. *Martyrs of Smyrna*. They are not to be commended who voluntarily repair to the judgement seat of persecutors, *ibid*. The Lord Jesus, though invisible, is ever present with his church, and attentive to the temper with which his gospel is received. He removes faithful and ungratefully received ministers, Rom. x. 21. The gospel will never be totally rooted out of the world. The life of our souls was in that commission of preaching to the Gentiles. Abused

*as an apostate, will not yet receive thy (g) testimony concerning me or my doctrine. And, having had quite a different view, I said, under deep affection for my dear countrymen, Lord, How should this be? for they know full well that, with the utmost eagerness I imprisoned great numbers once, and even beat till their very (h) flesh was torn, in every (i) synagogue where I had power, them of all sexes and ages that believed on thee, and trusted in thy word. And when the blood of thy early magnanimous (j) martyr Stephen was shed by cruel stoning, I also was standing by, and consenting from the heart unto his death, and kept, in proof of this, as guard, the upper raiment of them that slew him. And, after all I could allege for preaching first among the Jews, he, the blessed Master, said unto me, Depart therefore from Jerusalem forthwith: for I will send thee far hence unto the idolatrous Gentiles (k) with my divine and eminently successful message of salvation.*

## SECT. CII. FROM VERSE XXII.

AND they gave him *quiet attentive* audience unto this *alarming* word, *of their being nationally rejected from the (a) Messiah's kingdom, and the Gentiles taken into their room; and then, as with one consent, lifted up their loud enraged voices, and said (b) again, Away with such a wicked blasphemous fellow from the earth; for it is not*

same with 2 Cor. xii. 2. (g) Or evidence, chap. ix. 29. (h) So Greek, comp. chap. viii. 3. xxii. 4. (i) See Mat. x. 13. Acts xxvi. 2. (j) Or witness, chap. vii. 18. (k) Despised by the Jews as unclean, and every way unworthy, comp. Eph. ii. 13. Gal i. 16. ii. 8. Paul appears to have been born at Tarsus. and to have spent his childhood there; comp. chap. xxvi. 4, 5. Gal i. 14. Soon after which, he may have continued his studies at Jerusalem, but under close restrictions as to religious inquiry.

(a) What pointed to Deut. iii. 21. Isa lxxv. 1. was quite intolerable to them. (b) See chap. xxi. 36 Luke xxiii. 18.

## REFLECTIONS.

mercy will bring on wrath to the uttermost, 1 Thess. ii. 16. Popular clamour cannot justify what is illegal.



fit that he should live to pollute men longer with so gross impieties. And as they thus tumultuously and incessantly cried out, and cast off their (c) upper clothes in the madness of their impatience to have him killed, and their readiness to stone (d) him at a moment's warning, and with wild rage (e) threw dust into the air, the chief captain, for appeasing their rage if possible, commanded him to be brought farther into the castle *Antonia*, and bade that he should forthwith be examined under torture, by scourging, that, from extorted confession by this means, he might know (f) out of his own mouth<sup>a</sup> wherefore they (g) cried so vehemently against him. And as they of the soldiery stripped and bound him, to that end, with thongs, Paul, willing to maintain the regard due to his condition, and to prevent offence among weak Christians, said to the commanding centurion that stood (h) by<sup>b</sup>, Is it lawful for you who have the care of good order and peace, to scourge a man (i) that is a Roman citizen, and that too uncondemned after fair trial? When the centurion who had given the command from his superior, heard that alarming particular, he went and told the chief captain of the guard, saying, take heed, sir, what thou doest in the matter we are now upon; for this man, whom you would have to be examined, appears to be a Roman

(c) Cloaks. (d) Comp. chap. vii. 58. (e) Say some, that they might signify he was a disturber of both heaven and earth. Or to cover them as mourners. (f) Amidst these, they put various questions, A hideous practice. (g) What his real crime was, so Mat. xxvii. 37 Mark xv. 26. (h) See Mat. xxvii. 31. (i) Such indignity was prohibited in clear terms, and severely punishable. Tarsus, as a city, was more than once gifted with the immunities and privi-

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Where no distinct accusation is given in, nor shadow of proof, a prisoner ought to be dismissed. Examination by torture is absurd and tyrannical. <sup>b</sup> Though Christians should be prepared to suffer the worst things, yet when, with good conscience, they may avoid them, it is their duty, 1 Cor. vii. 21. Civil privileges must not tamely be given up to the insolent turbulent invader. To transmit them improved, is what we owe to posterity.

*citizen.* Then the chief captain *himself* came to Paul, and said unto him, tell me *plainly*, art thou a Roman citizen? He said, yea, *such is my undoubted privilege.* And the chief captain *who little apprehended this*, answered his prisoner in surprise: with a great sum (j) of money obtained I this *useful and honourable* freedom; and Paul said, in return to his imported question, how camest thou by it? But I had no such need, for (k) I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him by a new command, (l) which should have examined him with severe tortures: and the chief captain also was afraid (m) on account of the length he had gone, after he knew for certain that he was a Roman, and because he had so much as bound him by his inferiors, with a view to scourging. On the morrow, because he would have known the (n) certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, more than at present it was possible for noise and tumult together, he loosed him by order from his bands that he might have full liberty to plead; and commanded the chief of their priests, and all their council elders to appear, and brought Paul down from his place of confinement, and set him before them, to be regularly tried and judged according to the laws and usages of his own country.

## C H A P. XXIII.

### SECT. CIII. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND Paul earnestly beholding the (a) members of council, <sup>a</sup> bravely and undauntedly said unto them, leges of Rome, see Acts xvi. 37. (j) Through avarice was now purchased what before was gilded to merit. (k) It is no late acquisition. My fathers rejoiced in it long before me. (i) See verse 24. (m) So chap. xvi. 38. (n) Or true cause, see Luke i. 4. Acts ii. 36. xxv. 26.  
(a) See Acts i. 10. iii. 4.

### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Fortitude is the proper result of a good conscience. Men

(b) Men and brethren, *though at present appearing before you as a malefactor*, I have lived in the main, first as a Jew, and now as a Christian, to the utmost of my power, in all good (c) conscience before a heart-searching and rein-trying God until this present day. And the high priest (d) Ananias commanded them that stood by him for orders <sup>b</sup> at the bar, to smite him (e) on the mouth, as an infamous impertinent liar. Then said Paul unto him (f), with some indignant heat, God shall finite thee, thou <sup>c</sup> whited wall of a hypocrite; for, sittest thou (g) to judge after the law which he hath given, <sup>d</sup> and thus commandest me, *though unconvicted*, to be

(b) Comp. chap. xxii. 1. (c) See chap. xxiv. 16. 2 Tim. i. 3. Phil. i. 27. Greek, I have had my conversation. (d) Not the same with Annas, *Joseph. Ant.* l. xviii. c. 28. (e) He treats him as a renegado, and apostate, comp. 1 Kings xxii. 24. John xviii. 22. (f) Though undeservedly smote, the reproof given to the tyrant was harsh. How unlike John xviii. 23. Yet he does not pray, as some have thought. Prophets may use freedoms which belong not to others, see 1 Kings xviii. 18 2 Kings iii. 13. Isa. i. 10. Luke xiii. 31. The apostle might mistake, as well as another man. Though infallible as to his knowledge of the Christian doctrine, he was not so in his words and actions of common life, or upon other occasions. Some conceive this to have been said by the secret impulse of a prophetic spirit. In the beginning of the Jewish war, his house was reduced to ashes, himself dragged out and slain, *Joseph. Bel. Jud.* l. ii. c. 17. Luke xiii. 32. (g) This

## REFLECTIONS:

are compliant and tractable, when they are persuaded that you mean to profit and not hurt them. Moderation and equity are understood to be capital crimes by some, when extended to a man accounted by them the leader of heretics. It is betraying the cause of truth not to appear for it boldly at all hazards. <sup>b</sup> To treat an unjudged person after a harsh manner is wicked tyranny, comp. 1 Kings xxii. 24. Jer. xx. 2. John xviii. 22. A magistrate ought to consider his panel in no other light than that of an absolute stranger. <sup>c</sup> To pretend the care of religion, and to be estranged from the temper of it, is basely hypocritical, or argues gross self-ignorance, Mat. xxiii. 27. <sup>d</sup> To begin a judgement with punishing, is terribly iniquitous. Fortitude requires a sound knowledge of duty, with suitable practice. Warm tempers do sometimes express their sentiments with a degree of unreasonable asperity, Eph.

mitted before an assembled court, contrary to the (b) law in one of its clearest points? And they that stood by, interposing for the honour of magistracy, said, (i) revilest thou by such impious language, God's appointed high priest for sacred matters? Then said Paul most ingenuously, I will not indeed brethren, while heated by the abuse which he was the cause of, that he was the Jewish high priest; for (j) it is written, and might have been recollected, thou shalt not speak evil<sup>c</sup> of the ruler (k) of thy people. But when Paul perceived as he did look about him, that the one part of his judges were unbelieving (l) Sadducees, and the other believing indeed but affected hypocritical Pharisees, <sup>f</sup> he, hoping to give a turn to their unanimous proceedings, cried out in the council so as to be distinctly heard, (m) men and brethren, I was and still am a Pharisee, in religious principle, and the son of a (n) Pharisee, who did tenderly watch over my education: of the hope<sup>s</sup> of heaven upon good grounds, and resur-

as yet, was allowed to the Jews, except in capital crimes. (b) See Lev. xix. 15. John vii. 5. (i) Comp. verse 3. Perhaps he himself was confounded with the justice of the rebuke, and could not reply, see Luke xi. 45. (j) Ex. xxii. 8. That office was often changed, and Paul had been much out of Jerusalem, see Esth. ii. 2. (k) In the place of a magistrate, or prince, he did now act. (l) See verse 8 comp. Acts iv. 1, 2. They had great influence Acts v. 17. ; and were raised to high dignities, *Joseph. Ant. b. xiii. c. 10.* (m) See verse 1. (n) See Acts xxii. 23. Phil. iii. 5.

#### REFLECTIONS.

iv. 26, 31, 32. Jam. i. 19. 20. <sup>e</sup> Honour is due even to a wicked magistrate, on account of his office; and his rashness opposed with prudence and decency. <sup>f</sup> They who differ widely among themselves, do sometimes join together against the truth. To select the fittest means, and apply them with exquisite art and method, is a special gift of God. <sup>g</sup> For the ease and safety of his people, he doth sometimes divide their adversaries among themselves. What it pleased him to reveal, we ought carefully to examine, 1 John iv. 1. John v. 39. A proper time for reforming abuses should be waited for. Disputes concerning the fundamentals of religion, do sometimes lead to carefully beneficial inquiry. These admit of the strictest evidence, and should be studied. Whatever generally pleases

rection of the dead by a new life which leads to that pure everlasting enjoyment, I am at present called in question. And when he had so said, there arose from thence, a warm immediate dissension<sup>h</sup> between the (o) popular Pharisees, and the powerful Sadducees; and the multitude around them besides was greatly divided even as their leaders. For it is well known the Sadducees, (p) from scripture ignorance, say that there is no resurrection after death, neither (q) angel good or bad, nor yet inferior (r) spirit of any kind; but the Pharisees freely confess both. And there arose in the assembly a great

(o) Comp. chap. xv. 2. John vii. 43. x. 19. (p) See Mat. xxii. 23. Resurrection, and existing again after death, are the same Paul declines as yet, with great wisdom, to make mention of Christ, see chap. xvii. 21. (q) They might explain these of divine powers, inspirations, movements of the human mind only, see Mat. xxi. 27. (r) Comp. Mat. xxvii. 53. Luke xxiii. 46. Acts vii. 59. Heb. xii.

#### REFLECTIONS.

tastes not vitiated by education, may be traced to a just clear ground. From what we are curious to know of the divine works, as well as from the state of the moral world, and many other considerations, we are induced to believe that our present state would be very imperfect without a subsequent one. Why see so far, and have desire so much raised, only to be disappointed in the end? By analogy we must conclude, that the like desires would be frustrated in the inhabitants of all the other planets and systems; and thus the beautiful scheme of nature never be unfolded to any of them. Therefore our present state can only be the dawn or beginning of our existence; a state of preparation and probation for farther advancement. To advance gradually may be proper and necessary. When a new object comes within our reach, the addition to our knowledge is the greater by that means. <sup>h</sup> Praises bestowed upon some, are interpreted as so many slights and affronts passed upon others. When two sides fiercely contend, things do often come to such a pass, that God alone can calm the tempest. Religion, by this means, has lost her lustre, and will never recover it while a faculty of obstinate defending is understood to be an admired talent. Too many, even wise people in the main, despair of acquiring certainty, and content themselves with very general views. There is great danger in espousing principles and hypotheses borrowed from abstract sciences.

cry from this commotion of mind; and the (s) Scribes, whose principle office it was to study and explain the scriptures, that were of the Pharisees' part arose to put an end to the meeting, and strove violently to this purpose, saying, We find no evil at all to condemn in this man whom you have called us to try and judge: but if a human spirit who has left our abodes, as he would seem to aver, or an angel of higher rank hath spoken to him for confounding those Sadducean unbelievers, let us not (t) pretend to fight against Almighty God, whose undoubted messengers they are, but patiently wait the event. And when there arose still more and more, a great clamorous noisy dissension as to liberating or proceeding against the prisoner, the chief captain (u) fearing lest Paul, who began the fray, should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down for justice' sake, and to take him, if need were, by force from among them, and to bring him safe into the castle Antonia again.

#### S E C T. CIV. FROM VERSE XI.

AND the night following, the Lord Jesus, to appearance, (a) stood by him there, and said, Be of good cheer Paul<sup>a</sup> amidst all your present difficulties and apprehensions: for as thou hast testified with so much plainness and good resolution (b) of what concerns (c) me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear like faithful resolute witness for my cause also at the celebrated city of Rome, seat of empire, and metropolis of the world. And, when it was day, certain of the bigoted Jews (d) secretly met and banded toge-

23. (t) See Mat. ii 4. (t) Comp. chap. v. 39. x. 19. (u) Or tribune, having had information.

(a) This might be either in vision, or dream, comp. Luke ii. 9. xxiv. 4. Acts xii. 7. (b) See chap. xviii. 5. (c) My religion and glory. (d) Chiefly of the Sadducean sect, who took offence at

#### R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> Christ ever seasonably strengthens his servants. He determines for them their places and labours. To be approved and encouraged by him, is preferable to any deliverance, Phil.

ther against the life of that holy and excellent man, and bound themselves under a horrible curse (e) of execration from every thing good, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink<sup>b</sup> till they had killed (f) Paul the apostate. And, black as the design was, they were more than forty which had made this rash wicked conspiracy (g), so that if one did fail another might execute. And they came without reserve, to the (h) chief priests belonging to Aaron's family, and their assisting elders, and said, We have one and all bound ourselves under a great curse of God against such as draw back, that we will eat nothing (i), be the obstacles ever so numerous, until we have slain this pest of a fellow Paul. Now, therefore, ye who hear us, with the whole collected council, go, signify in person to the chief captain, as your request, that he forthwith, suitably to a matter of such necessary public moment, bring him down unto you from his place of confinement to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly still concerning the guilt wherewith we have to charge him: and we, or ever he come near where the court is, that no part of the blame may fall upon you<sup>c</sup>, are ready, at all adventures, to kill him who has so long disturbed our peace. And when Paul's sister's son, by one mean or other, heard of their

his late discourse, see chap. xix. 40. (e) Comp. Mat. xxvi. 74. Psal. cii. 9. (f) Comp. chap. xxii. 21. xxv. 2, 3. (g) Or perhaps all set on him at once, for certainty and speed. They might pretend hereby, to imitate a Phineas, or Mattathias. (h) Comp. verse 2. chap. xxii. 5, 30. (i) Signs of great earnestness, as in Luke xxii.

#### REFLECTIONS.

i. 20, &c. <sup>b</sup> Inordinate zeal considers all who differ as enemies of God, John xvi. 2. Luke vi. 15. The transports thereof are most outrageous. Prudence is courteous, so as to charge none without proper evidence. The pious, in a way of plain duty, leave all to be over-ruled as God will. A design of murder, avowed with impunity and before the chief magistrates, is hideous, John xvi. 2. They counsel in vain whom God abhors, and determines to defeat, Job. v. 13. It is always in favour of innocence, when base methods are taken to injure. <sup>c</sup> Lies and murders in the way of false zeal are diabolical, John viii.

lying in wait for a life so precious, he went and, under permission, entered into the castle, and told his uncle Paul what their bloody intention was. Then Paul, like a man of sense and business, by a servant, called one of the centurions on guard, unto him, and said, Bring this young man, sir, unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain <sup>d</sup> interesting thing to tell him (j). So he took him from thence, and condescendingly brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the castle-prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me with earnestness to bring this young man unto thee who hath something, as he affirms, to say unto thee which deserves thy peculiar notice. Then the chief captain, after a gentle obliging manner, took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, where he might speak with freedom, and asked him, What is that affair thou hast to tell me of? And he said, giving at the same time his reasons (k), The leading Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would only inquire somewhat of him more perfectly than they had time and leisure for until now. But do not thou, sir, for peace and justice's sake (l), yield unto them: for, I do assure thee, there (m) lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath of dreadful execration, that they will neither (n) eat nor drink till they have killed him whom thou hast in charge: and now are they of the council ready, looking for a (o) promise to the above effect from thee.

15. Acts ii. 30. (j) None are named. The detection was of high public moment. A discovery could not hurt. (k) See verse xv. (l) Comp. chap. xxi. 14. (m) Or would be a cause before God, if they did eat, or drink. (n) Comp. Esth. iv. 7. Ezek. vi. 26.

#### REFLECTIONS.

44. <sup>d</sup> No proper means of safety ought to be neglected, Acts xxvii. 24, &c. <sup>e</sup> In offices of trust, integrity and prudence are most essential.



## SECT. CV. FROM VERSE XXII.

SO the chief captain then let the young man depart, and, *on his way out, with great wisdom and integrity, thus peremptorily* charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me, *both for the prisoner's sake, and that of the public.* And, *because he was unwilling needlessly to irritate the factious Jews, and was accountable for the life of this same prisoner,* he called unto him, *by one of the guard,* two centurions, *whom he could most confide,* saying, Make ready *with dispatch and as little noise as may be,* two hundred foot soldiers to go to Cesarea (a) *on the sea coast,* and horsemen three score and ten, and (b) spearmen two hundred, at the third hour (c) of the night *from sun set :* and provide them (d) beasts, that they may set Paul on *with such as shall be more immediately answerable,* and bring him safe unto (e) Felix the governor. And he also wrote a letter after this *precise* (f) manner : (g) Claudius Lyfias (h), *who commands at Jerusalem,* unto the most (i) excellent governor (j) Felix, sendeth (k), greeting him *with best wishes of health, joy, and peace.* This man Paul, *whom I have sent under a strong guard,* was tumultuously taken of the Jews, and should, *to all appearance,* have been killed of them: then came I with a *powerful band like an army,* and *after due care* (l), rescued

(a) Comp. chap. viii. 40. x. 1. On account of a ready communication with Rome, the presidents of Judea very often resided here, *Tacit. An. l. xviii.* (b) Greek, them that take with the right hand javelins or bows. (c) At nine of the night. Paul was a Roman citizen, and behoved to be cared for. (d) As camels, or horses, see Luke x. 34. xix. 35. (e) Brother of Pallas, raised from being a slave to high power. Josephus calls him Claudius Felix, in honour of the emperor, his early patron; and Tacitus, Antonius Felix, in honour of that emperor's mother, whom he served. (f) Or form. (g) An illustrious Roman name, and probably given him when he was made a citizen of Rome, by favour of Claudius. (h) A Grecian name, chap. xxiv. 7. (i) Common style then among the great. Honestly given, Luke i. 3. Felix was cruel and libidinous, *Tacit.* (j) Under the Roman emperor, and over Judea. (k) Or saluting, see chap. xv. 23. (l) See chap.

him from their fury, with so much the more diligence, having understood since that he was a Roman citizen. And, when (m) I would have known the cause, by a regular examination, wherefore they accused him in so vehement a manner, I brought him forth, with that view, into their (n) council: whom I perceived soon to be accused of certain nice controversial questions of their Jewish (o) law, but to have nothing laid to his charge, even if there had been sufficient proof, worthy of being punished with death, or so much as of imprisonment and (p) bonds. And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid (q) wait for the unhappy man to cut him off, I sent him straightway from Jerusalem to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, who made their appearance after he was gone, (r) to say before thee my superior, what they had farther to urge against him (s). Farewell. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded (t) them, by the equitable tribune, took Paul and brought him by night marches to (u) Antipatris, on the sea coast. On the morrow, they left their horsemen to go to Cesarea with him, and the soldiers on foot returned to (x) the castle. Who when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor Felix, from Lyfias, presented Paul also before him. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was, whom they had brought hither. And when he understood by them that he was of (y) Cilicia, I will hear thee apologize for thyself, said he, when thine accusers are also come up. And he commanded him till then, to be kept distinct from other prisoners in Herod's (z) judgement hall.

xxi. 31, &c. iv 7. (m) There is some degree of dissimulation here, comp. chap. xxii. 25, &c. He aimed at praise. (n) See chap. xxii. 30. (o) comp. chap. xviii. 15. (p) He becomes a kind of apologist for Paul. (q) Verse xii. 15, 20. comp. chap. ix, 24. (r) See verse 35. xxii 16. (s) Comp. chap. xv. 29. (t) Or chief captain. (u) Called of old Caphor and Salama, 1 Mac. vii. 31. In the middle between Joppa and Cesarea, rebuilt by Herod the Great, and called after the name of his father (x) It was not safe to leave this place long exposed to seditious Jews, especially after such a disappointment. (y) See chap. xxi. 39. xxii. 3. (z) A place of some honour, built by Herod, comp. Mat. xxvii. 27. A kind of state prison, see Acts xii. 17, &c.

## C H A P. XXIV.

## SECT. CVI. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND after five days from his being brought to Cæsarea, (a) Ananias the high priest, in person, descended thither from Jerusalem with the elders of the Jewish people belonging to the Sanhedrim, and with a certain famous Roman (b) orator of those times named (c) Tertullus, who informed the governor what they had to witness against Paul, And when by the proper officer of court, he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, for substance as follows: (d) Seeing that <sup>a</sup> by thee, we of this province enjoy great quietness, and that (e) very worthy deeds, for such good end, are done unto <sup>b</sup> this whole nation by thy attentive (f) providence. We accept it always, and in all places, <sup>c</sup> which are committed to thine inspection, (g) most noble (h) Felix, with all imaginable thankfulness of

(a) See chap. xxiii. 2. (b) Named Sophist, or wise, among the Greeks, that is, eloquent in pleading. (c) A Roman name, and who probably spoke in the governor's own language. (d) Here was flattery, on purpose to procure good will; for the contrary was true, *Joseph.* l. xx. c. 5, 6. *Tacit. Hist.* l. v. 8, 9. *An.* l. xii. § 84. (e) Such as taking vengeance upon Eleazar the robber, and Egyptian impostor, chap. xxi. 38. (f) Or superintendency. (g) Illustrious. Usual title of honour, chap. xxiii. 26. (h) Sig-

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Dissembling sycophants wrap up in silence what they suppose would offend, and only speak of things which please, chap. xxi. 38. They also insinuate, under both, how they would have their enemies treated. They who are most elaborate as to style, are often most careless as to matters of fact. It is very painful to hear the most amiable goodness injured by false virulent accusations. The righteous tribunal of God will put every character in true light. Let us always thankfully accept the blessings of good government. <sup>b</sup> Illustrious qualifications in a governor. <sup>c</sup> Magistrates ought to be chosen from among the chief; and to evince that they are such, should be their highest ambition. It is much beneath a Chris-

*heart to our superiors.* Notwithstanding that I be not further tedious unto thee, *by the mention of unnecessary circumstances*, I pray thee that thou wouldst hear us of thy wonted clemency, a few <sup>d</sup> plain and direct words. For we found this man, *now so justly enpannelled*, (i) a most peitilent fellow by principle, and <sup>e</sup> from his artful noxious influence, a mover of sedition among all the Jews *he meets with* throughout the (j) world, and a (k) ringleader <sup>f</sup> of the base heretical <sup>g</sup> sect (l) of the (m) Nazarenes; who also, *among other of his impieties*, hath gone about of late to profane (n) the sacred temple at Jerusalem, by bringing uncircumcised people into it: whom we, therefore, (o) very properly took up, and

nifying happy. (i) Greek, a pest. Metaphorical. (j) Comp. Luke ii. 1. (k) Military allusion to such as command. (l) Or heresy. That is, the choice of an opinion, usually taken in a bad sense, 1 Cor xi. 19 Gal. v. 20: Tit. iii. 10. (m) Named from Jesus of Nazareth, Mark x. 47. Luke xviii. 37. John i. 46. Acts ii. 22. Intended from its meanness, by way of reproach, Mat. ii. 23. (n) Calumny, like Acts xxi. 28. (o) By tumult, chap. xxi. 27, 30.

#### REFLECTIONS.

tian character, to affect ring-leading among sects and parties. In the spirit of love, let us serve the prince of peace. Meekness and usefulness are the best methods of silencing ignorant malicious clamour. <sup>d</sup> Distinct and compendious narratives are most powerful, and suited best to men of business. The garb of truth is simple, whereas art and calumny take a wide compass. <sup>e</sup> Truly pious men, and fond of peace, have often since been charged as impiously turbulent. The most seditious are they, who hate and vex those who seek after truth, comp. chap. ix. 23. xiii. 50. xiv. 1, 13. General unproved criminations merit no regard. The nature of that doctrine ought first to be explained. They do not disturb the public peace, who calmly differ in judgement, and are obedient to civil laws. <sup>f</sup> It is noble in a spiritual officer, to fight by suitable arguments for the gospel. <sup>g</sup> Believers in Christ, ought all to be denominated from himself. To do otherwise, is being wickedly invidious. All good Christians once were heretics, because they differed from Jewish and Pagan churches; yet they held, as others since have done, what God commanded. The truth, upon proper calls, ought not to be concealed, 1 Pet. iii. 15.

would have (p) fairly judged according to the rules of our divine law. But the chief captain of guard at Jerusalem for the time, even Lyfias, came upon us when designing to do our duty, and with great unexpected violence (q) took him away out of our hands, and as he might think from the reach of just regular proceedings to send him hither, commanding his accusers afterwards, if they chose, to come unto thee for redress: by examining of whom, by thy well known care and assiduity, thyself mayest take certain knowledge of all these injurious things to religion and peace, whereof we now accuse him. And, after finishing this smooth flattering address, the Jews also, who came along with Tertullus, assented to the words which he spake, saying, That these things were unquestionably so as he had stated them.

#### SECT. CVII. FROM VERSE X.

THEN Paul also, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak in his own defence, who had no hired advocate, nor so much as one friend in the court, answered with an undaunted composed freedom to each of the above points: Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many (a) years <sup>a</sup> called to act the part of a president and (b) judge unto this nation of Judea, with the places (c) which do immediately encompass it, I do the more cheerfully answer (d) in thy presence for myself; be-

(p) Most false, for they meant to murder, chap. xxi. 31. They had power as yet to judge, but not to inflict death. (q) They intended murder, and yet complain of violence.

(a) Ten, Joseph. Bel. Jud. l. ii. c. 11. (b) Hebrew manner for governor. (c) As Trachonitis Batanea, and Gaulonitis. (d) Greek, Apologize, as in chap. xxii. 1. He most exactly answers to Tertullus's three charges of sedition, heresy, and profanation of the

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> People are safe under upright judges that know the law. We are commanded to render unto magistracy all due reverence, so far as we may without wounding our conscience, *Mat. of Smyrna*. Grave and simple language is the fittest for truth. The exordium of this narrative, or speech, is elo-

cause that thou *who art not ignorant of our customs*, mayest well understand, and by an easy proof, that there are yet *(e)* but twelve days since I went up to the *Pentecost feast* at Jerusalem, for to worship Almighty God, along with my other devout countrymen. <sup>b</sup> And they, all that time, neither found me in the temple *(f)* so much as disputing with any man *between the intervals of prayer and sacrifice*, neither raising up the people there in the *smallest degree*, neither in the synagogues without the temple, nor in the city elsewhere; neither can they prove by argument and witnesses which may be relied upon, the very shocking <sup>c</sup> things whereof they have now the hardihoods to accuse me in such presence. But this I readily <sup>d</sup> confess unto thee, nor will ever recede from, that after the *(g)* way of religious belief and obedience, which they, my persecutors, call *(h)* heresy, so worship I the God of my *(i)* ever memorable Jewish fathers, believing with the heart all things which are written in the <sup>e</sup> law of Moses, and the *(j)* subsequent prophets, when understood as they ought concerning the divine mind and will. And have, in particular <sup>f</sup>, hope toward the

temple. *(e)* Greek, ten and two, so chap. xix. 7. He came, like other Jews who had been absent, and was taken and imprisoned before the feast, so as to have no time for seditious practices, chap. xx. 16. comp. chap. xxi. 17, 18, 26. xxii. 30. *(f)* Which yet was lawful about religious matters, and in certain of its courts. *(g)* See chap. xviii. 26. xix. 23. *(h)* Or a sect. *(i)* Comp. chap. iii. 13. v. 30. 2 Tim i. 3. A regard to paternal deities, was held honourable among the Greeks and Romans. *(j)* See chap. xxvi. 6, 7.

#### REFLECTIONS.

gant. <sup>b</sup> Composure and reverence are due to solemn acts of devotion. <sup>c</sup> The later that things have been done, the more certain we may be of them. It is a maxim founded in reason and humanity, that crimes are not to be presumed. <sup>d</sup> Lying orators make but a slight impression. By the Roman law, both parties were to be heard before sentence was passed. To prove and not to assert, is the province of reason. To detect falsehood is one method of establishing truth. What makes for the glory of God and the good of mankind, should be publicly owned. <sup>e</sup> What is written, and not oral tradition, is to be our rule. <sup>f</sup> Hope respects what is good, and everlasting

*righteous power of God, that he must fulfil whatever he hath promised, which they themselves who have come to accuse me also (k) allow, that there shall hereafter <sup>s</sup> be a resurrection of the (l) dead, both of the sincerely just (m) for endless happiness, and for punishment of the unjust. And, owing to this great efficacious argument, herein (n) do I closely exercise myself to have always a <sup>h</sup> conscience void of offence by known evil, toward God and toward men. Now, be it further observed, sir, that after many years absence from Jerusalem, I came thither, not to disturb, but to bring alms collected from neighbouring countries to assist the poor of my present needy (o) nation <sup>i</sup>, and sacrificial offerings likewise. Whereupon, as thus piously employed, certain Jews from (p) Asia the Less, who raised the outcry, found me, after a peaceable manner, purified as the law (q) relative to vows directs in midst of the temple, neither with suspicious multitude, nor with shadow of tumult: who ought now, as being the first attackers of my person, to have been here before*

21. (k) That is, the Pharisees, chap xxiii. 6, 8. (l) Literally an existence, or standing again, that is, future state, see Psal xvi. 10. Dan. xii. 2. Hos. xiii. 14. (m) Comp. John v. 28, 29. 2 Cor. v. 10. (n) Comp chap. xxiii. 1. Phil. i. 10. (o) See chap. xi. 29, 30. (p) Chap xxi. 27. More largely understood, it comprehends Jerusalem and all Canaan. (q) See chap. xxi. 26. xxvi. 12.

#### REFLECTIONS.

life above all things else, 2 Thef. i. 8, 9. Rom. viii. 25, 26. The Christian discipline can only be unacceptable to those who are misled by false opinions. *Just. Mart.* <sup>s</sup> The promises of eternal life by Christ, are clear and numerous, John v. 28, 29. 1 Cor xv. 20, &c. xxvi. 52. 1 Theff. iv. 13, &c. 2 Tim. i. 10. If this simple confession of Paul had been adhered to generally, the honour and peace of the church would have been great. <sup>h</sup> Conscience is moral judgement of our own actions applied to a right rule. It testifies rewards and punishes, Rom. ii. 14, 15. A good one is an admirable ground of hope, Acts xxiii. 1. 2 Tim. i. 3. They who have supports within may meet the worst of injuries from a mistaken unkind world. None need fear the charge of heresy, who make scripture the standard of their faith; and along with diligent search, seek inward divine teachings. <sup>i</sup> It looks not like a malefactor, to be greatly

thee, rather than any other (*r*), and legally <sup>k</sup> object if they had ought of criminal nature distinctly proveable against me. Or else, in their absence, let these same enemies here say, and make it instantly good, if they, with all their skill, prompted by former injuries, have found any evil doing in me while amidst such as they knew best<sup>e</sup>, I stood unfriended before the very (*s*) council they are members of, except it be for this one voice they shall think proper to charge me with, that I cried out, under suitable order (*t*), standing among them, Touching so essential a doctrine as the resurrection of the dead for solemn judgement, I am called in question by you this day.

### SECT. CVIII. FROM VERSE XXII.

AND when Felix heard from both parties these things, having more perfect knowledge of that Christian (*a*) way, than those who came to accuse the apostle, were sensible of; he deferred giving judgement between them, and said for justification of his conduct, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down to me at Cesarea from Jerusalem, <sup>a</sup> I will inquire after and know to the very uttermost, and be able to determine of your present disputed matter. And, dismissing the assembly, he commanded a centurion of the company to keep Paul safe, and though

(*r*) Their absence, and no particular accusation, was very suspicious. (*s*) See chap. xxii. 30. xxiii. 1 (*t*) chap. xxiii. 6. xxiv. 15.

(*a*) Comp. chap. ix. 2. xix. 9, 23. He had lived a good while in Judea, verse 10. and had a Jewish wife, verse 24. see chap. xxvi. 26. Or by a change of the construction, after that I shall more exactly have known of this way; and when Lysias shall come

### REFLECTIONS.

helpful to the poor. <sup>k</sup> They who accuse, ought to do so in presence. It is lawful for every man to be his own defender.

<sup>1</sup> Whatever artful causes of persecution may be pretended, conscience must bear true witness.

<sup>a</sup> Rulers ought to inform themselves at large of the influence of Christian principles on public tranquillity. A plain defence is more to be regarded, than complimenting insinuat-



a kind of prisoner by that means, to let him have liberty more than usual; and in particular, besides freedom from bonds, that he should forbid none of his familiar acquaintance to minister <sup>b</sup> necessary food, or come unto him for relieving converse. And after certain days, when Felix came from a (b) tour in the country, with his adultrous wife Drusilla, (c) which, though of Idumean stock, was educated a Jewess; he sent for Paul, and heard him at large concerning (d) the things relative to faith in Jesus Christ. And knowing the character of his hearers, as he reasoned close of the nature and obligations to <sup>c</sup> righteousness, which would give to every one their due, chaste temperance, and a judgement to come after death, by sure divine appointment; (e) Felix, under horrors of guilt, from his bypast unjust licentious life, trembled like a pannel, <sup>d</sup> to think of what might soon happen; and for

down, I will expiscate your affair at greater length. (b) Or visit. Or from his own palace in Cesarea, and probably nigh to the place of Paul's confinement. (c) So named probably in memory of Drusus, the father of Claudius the Roman emperor, who had a great affection for Herod Agrippa, the king of the Jews; or of Drusilla Livia, wife of Cesar Augustus, and mother of Drusus. *Joseph and Tacit. comp. chap. xxv. 13.* She was given in marriage to Azizus, king of the Emessenes, who submitted to be circumcised. Felix, falling in love with her great beauty, prevailed upon her to leave her husband, and marry him, *Suet. c. 28.* He was husband to three queens, or princesses, one after another. *Tacit. An. xii. Hist. 5.* (d) So Greek To discharge a part of his promise. (e) Each of them supportable by reason, as well as gospel, *comp. Acts xvii. 31.*

#### REFLECTIONS.

ing harangues. The native force of truth is wonderful. <sup>b</sup> Almighty God can, and often does, over-rule the spirits of people who are far from being good to favour his injured servants. Opportunities of usefulness make confinement itself light. <sup>c</sup> This was St. Paul's preaching Christ, or the faith of Christ. Not by outward appearance, but by his soul and understanding, is man distinguished. *Mart. in Palest.* How much superior in excellence, was Paul to Felix. After this sort, to lord it over the lords of the earth is triumph indeed. *Last.* <sup>d</sup> Fear and some mixture of grief may be without thorough

*Sake of instant ease, answered his brave prisoner, Go thy way back for this time, (f) where, as before, thou shalt be safely kept; thy doctrine, upon the whole, is far from being amiss, when, therefore, I have a more convenient season, than now to speak upon the like great<sup>e</sup> subjects, I will call for (g) thee again, to that effect. He hoped also, from an extreme covetousness of temper, even in midst of his present sad forboding thoughts, that money, by his being (h) connected with such multitudes of people, should have been given him of Paul, that he might soon loose him: wherefore he sent for him the<sup>t</sup> oftener, and even communed with him to so base a purpose, though never under equal good impressions. But after two years from the time of Paul's arrest, (i) Porcius Festus came, by the emperor Nero's appointment, into (j) Felix' room as governor; and Felix willing to shew the Jews, whom his wife was allied to, and whom before he had pro-*

Rom. i. 18. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. (f) Or as the matter now stands. (g) Yet we do not read that he ever did, for religious purposes. (h) Comp. verse 17. (i) Of which family were the renowned Catos of old. (j) He was accused of crimes, and

#### REFLECTIONS.

repentance. The worst, when strict and impartial judgement is taught, cannot always shift conviction. Sad state, when a man is not able to endure himself. By obligations to the moral law the knowledge of a saviour, and acceptance of him are seen to be most needful. To deal plainly as gospel ministers, requires a magnanimous heart. What will the haughtiest sinners one day appear in presence of the universal judge. It is dreadful to delay the important affair of salvation to an uncertain hereafter. \* We have no intimation of Drusilla's discovering any remorse. She might confide in her Jewish privileges, and expect to be saved as a daughter of Abraham, notwithstanding the immorality and wickedness of her life. † The sale of justice for money, is dreadful! Serious impressions, once got the better of, do not often return again. They who hear and tremble, may hear again and tremble no more! Stilled convictions serve only to increase the weight of guilt and condemnation. Of all doctrine, that which would reconcile the hopes of salvation with a corrupt heart and an immoral life is the

*evoked* <sup>s</sup> *with various crimes*, (*k*) a pleasure, left Paul *at length* bound.



## C H A P. XXV.

## SECT. CIX. FROM VERSE I.

**N**OW when Festus was come into the province of *Judea* for government, after a short stay of three days he ascended from Cefarea (*a*) to Jerusalem, *the capital*, for declaring and entering upon his office. Then the high priest, and the chief (*b*) people of the Jews, *whom time and consideration did not yet soften*, informed him who came to govern against Paul, and besought him for speedy punishment, and desired this by way of early and chief (*c*) favour against him, that he would send for him back to Jerusalem, to have this affair judged of and determined in the most public manner, <sup>a</sup> laying wait in the way, at the same time, without his knowledge, upon their requests being granted, (*d*) to kill him by assassination. But because he saw no just cause for such unnecessary trouble, Festus prudently answered, that Paul should be kept as close a prisoner as they chose at Cefarea, and <sup>b</sup> that he him-

recalled to answer for himself. (*k*) Such soothing did not avail him at last. Only a brother's interest did save him from death.

(*a*) Where he first arrived from Italy, and in which he was chiefly to reside, see chap. xxiii. 23. (*b*) Comp. chap. xxiii. 2. xxiv. 1. (*c*) They were allowed by custom, to ask somewhat agreeable to their wishes, upon such admissions. (*d*) They expected little satisfaction in a religious contest, and before a heathen governor; nor could they prove any crime against Paul justly capital.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

worst. Power and grandeur are dangerous snares. <sup>s</sup> They who administer equity, need not court popular favour by mean compliances.

<sup>a</sup> The wicked can be diligent and indefatigable even in a bloody purpose. The best servants of Christ, still may be the worst used. <sup>b</sup> The Jews would have had Paul first judged by

self would depart shortly thither. Let them, therefore, said he, which among you are *most* able (e) by authority, and *most* skilful to plead, go down from hence with me, and accuse this man upon proper evidence, if there be any such (f) *pestive* wickedness in him as you now speak of. And, when he had tarried among them (g) more than ten days, settling proper measures of future conduct with inferior officers, he went down unto Cæsarea, where he ought to reside; and the very next day, sitting on the judgement-seat for public causes, commanded Paul to be brought forward from prison. And, when he was come where pannels are usually put, the numerous Jews which came down (h) by supreme order from Jerusalem, stood round about his place, and laid many (i) and grievous <sup>c</sup> complaints against Paul, which they could not prove (j) by proper evidence to be justly chargeable; while he, in return, answered for himself: Neither against the (k) law of Moses given to the Jews, neither against the temple (l) honour, nor yet against (m) Cæsar have <sup>d</sup> I offended any thing at all; God is my witness. But Festus willing, at least in part (n) to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said for (o) obtaining his consent, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there, in an assembly of thine own countrymen, be judged of these controvertible things before me?

(e) Comp. Rev. vi 10. Acts xxvii. 43. (f) What is molestive, or inconvenient, as in Luke xxiii. 41. 2 Theff. iii. 2. (g) Here MSS. diff. r. (h) See verse 5. (i) Such as in chap. xxiv. 5, 6. xvii. 7. xviii. 13. (j) So chap. xxiv. 13. (k) Comp. chap. xxiv. 14. xxviii. 17. (l) See chap. xxiv. 6, 12. (m) Like as in chap. xvii. 7. (n) Comp. verse 3. chap. xxi. 27. (o) To have done otherwise

#### REFLECTIONS.

themselves as an heretic, and then delivered over, as they had done Christ before, to the civil arm. By what invisible springs doth the ever blessed God govern the world, and with what wisdom and energy. <sup>c</sup> If sufficient to accuse, who would be guiltless? They who persecute, charge the same things over and over again with new violence and noise, on purpose to weary out their judges. <sup>d</sup> Short and direct terms besit an innocent

Then said Paul, *who foresaw the probable issue if he had yielded*, I stand at Cesar's (p) judgement-seat by means of his deputy, where I ought, *being also a Roman citizen*, to be judged: to the Jews, *as already, and in all the simplicity of truth, averred*, have I done no wrong, as thou also, by this time, very well knowest. For if I be an offender against justice and peace, or have committed any thing worthy of being punished by death itself, I refuse not to suffer and die, agreeable to wise salutary laws: but if there be none of these things (q) which the strictest inquisition will render still more clear, whereof these now present accuse and are able to make out against me, no man, acting in character and however high, may (r) deliver me unto them who are seen to be so causelessly adverse, I appeal even from thee, Festus, unto the superior tribunal of Cesar, my own chief magistrate and prince. Then Festus, having dismissed the parties for a little, when he had conferred with the members of his own council, according to the form in provincial Roman judicatories, answered upon their recal, (s) hast thou Paul, then appealed from this unto the judgement of Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

would have been iniquitous to a Roman citizen, see chap. xvi. 2. (p) Comp. verse 8. (q) To be done by them as they will; Greek, or no man may condemn me to death, for the sake of pleasing them. (r) Or seeing thou hast. (s) Such it was by commission, Matth. xxvii. 2.

#### REFLECTIONS.

breast. 'A good conscience is bold in midst of great hazards. The most powerful that are, may not do what they cannot do with justice, comp. chap. iii. 14. It is a Christian's duty to use the protection of law though under heathen magistracy, especially when their adversaries are not of the true faith. When Paul stood before Festus, he stood, in effect, before Cesar's tribunal who was constituent; and he knew his own rights. A judge ought not to favour intreaty, but to decide according to the laws. *Socrates in Plato* & An inconstant partial one, should be prudently declined, comp. chap. xxiii. 2. In trials every thing should be conducted with the greatest courtesy.

## SECT. CX. FROM VERSE XIII.

AND after certain *few days from hence*, king (a) Agrippa (b) *the younger, who obtained his high title from the emperor Claudius*, and his wife (c) Bernice, came unto Cesarea to salute Festus *the procurator on his arrival*. And, when they had been there *as visitors* many days, Festus, *among other things*, declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is *here* a certain man *who was left in bonds by* (d) Felix, *my predecessor in office*; about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, *upon an early journey thither*, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me *of different crimes they had to charge him with*, desiring to have *instant and severe judgement given* against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans (e) *upon mere complaint* to deliver <sup>a</sup> any man to die before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have *full licence after hearing* to answer for himself concerning the crime,<sup>b</sup> laid against him. Therefore, when they were come *hither from the capital*, without any delay, on the morrow, I sat on the judgement-seat *for public causes*, and commanded the man to be brought forth *from prison to make what defence he could*. Against whom, when the accusers stood up *before me*,

(a) Named for Marcus Agrippa, the friend and son-in law of Augustus Cesar. Son of that Herod who slew the apostle James, Acts xii. He must have heard frequent reports of the spreading of Christianity. (b) For his possessions, see Luke iii. 1. Josephus represents him as a prudent sedate man. (c) From the Greek Cheronice, see Josephus, and Juvenal Sat. 6. Some say his sister, with whom he was suspected of being in an incestuous commerce, consult *Joseph Tacit. Suet.* (d) See chap xxiv 7. (e) They profess high regards for equity, and abhorrence of barbarian fierce-

## REFLECTIONS:

<sup>a</sup> It is against the common law of reason and equity to hear accusations in absence of the person accused. This is not to seek a trial, but a sentence, without conviction, Prov. xviii. 13.

<sup>b</sup> The greater the crime is, the more need of candour and cau-

they brought none accusation of such *violent* things as I supposed *punishable* (f) *by clear Roman law*; but had certain *nice* questions against him of their own *Jewish* (g) *superstition*, and of one *Jesus* which was dead, whom Paul *most absurdly* (h) *affirmed to be alive, after being crucified unto death*. And because I doubted <sup>c</sup> *what was fit to determine* of such manner of *peculiar national* questions, I asked him whether he would go up to Jerusalem, and there <sup>d</sup> *be judged of these matters of religious ceremony before me*. But, *from some suspicion or other*, when Paul had appealed *in most explicit terms* to be reserved unto the hearing (i) of *Augustus Cesar himself*, I commanded him to be kept *as before, in safe custody* till I might have it in my power to send him to Cesar. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also, (j) *if you please* <sup>e</sup>, *incline to hear the man myself, upon what now begins to be much spoken of*. To-morrow, said he civilly, thou shalt hear him *indeed*.

## SECT. CXI. FROM VERSE XXIII.

AND on the morrow when king Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great (a) *pomp of attire suited to their rank*, and was entered into the place of hearing *public causes*, with the chief *military* (b) *captains*, and other principal men of the city *for station, office, and*

*ness*, comp. Ex. xxx. 6. (f) See chap. xviii. 14. xxiii. 29. (g) See chap. xvii. 22. A word taken from fear of deities, and of middle signification. (h) See chap. xxvi. 3. (i) An illustrious title, signifying one to whom worship is due, even as unto God. At this time prostituted upon Nero. (j) Comp. Luke xxiii. 8.

(a) Greek, much phantasy, or parade. (b) Thus prepared for Paul, an illustrious theatre, to give his last testimony in Judea,

## REFLECTIONS.

tion. <sup>c</sup> Where people would hide their own faults they conceal or narrate unfaithfully, comp. verse 9. They must ever doubt who do not seriously seek after evidence. <sup>d</sup> It is prudent to seek after farther information upon important subjects. <sup>e</sup> The gospel history must not be considered as a mere amusement.

*wealth*; at Festus' commandment Paul, *in humble garb*, was brought forth *from prison by proper servants*.<sup>a</sup> And Festus *briefly said before the whole splendid audience*, king Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye *now see this remarkable man*, about whom all the multitude of the Jews, *since I came among them*, (c) have dealt with me both at Jerusalem and also here, *to sentence him*, (d) crying out *with vehemence often*, that he ought not to live any longer *upon earth*. But when I found, *upon diligent impartial trial*, that he had committed nothing<sup>b</sup> worthy of death (e) *according to our laws*, and that he himself hath appealed *even from us to Augustus Cesar*; I have determined, *agreeable to his right and wish*, to send him *soon*. Of whom *notwithstanding* I have no (f) *clear and certain thing* to write unto (g) my great Lord. Wherefore I have brought him *in this open manner*, forth before (h) you all, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination *of the affair*, had by *one of deep skill even in Jewish controversies*, I might have somewhat *proper* to write upon *such a business*. For it seemeth to me quite unreasonable, to send a prisoner *so far off*, and before *so great a personage*, and not withal to signify in *express terms*, (i) the crimes laid by *his enemies* against him.

for Jesus Christ, comp. 1 Tim. ii. 2. (c) See verse 1, &c. (d) Comp. chap. xxii. 32. xxiv. 5. (e) A remarkable testimony, see chap. xxii. 31. xxiii. 9. (f) Comp. chap. xxii. 30. (g) Imperial majesty Cesar, Nero. A most flattering title, importing dominion over servants, or rather slaves. Refused by Augustus, and even Tiberius, (h) Comp. chap. xii. 6. (i) Comp. chap. xxvi. 32. As yet the Romans had no law against the Christians.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Integrity is more honourable and of greater excellence, than all external pomp and grandeur. Curiosity doth often prompt bad people to hear of religious matters, who, in common do shamefully neglect them, comp. Prov. xvii. 16.  
<sup>b</sup> What is mysterious at the time is often over-ruled, by infallible divine love, for good.



## C H A P. XXVI.

## SECT. CXII. FROM VERSE I.

**T**HEN Agrippa said unto Paul, *who stood just before him*, thou art now permitted to speak for <sup>a</sup> defence of thyself, and with all suitable freedom. Then Paul, as craving silence from the rest, and to be ingenuously attended to, stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself in the graceful manner following: I think myself happy, <sup>b</sup> king Agrippa, because upon so great a number of injurious charges laid in against me, I shall answer for myself this day (a) before thee touching all the things without exception, whereof I am accused of my countrymen, and yours, the Jews; especially because I know thee to be expert in all sacred customs, <sup>c</sup> and even doctrinal questions, which are among the Jews whom you govern, and to whose laws you are attached, do I rejoice; wherefore, these just grounds of confidence being premised, I beseech thee for some few moments to hear me out, with patience and candour. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the very first signs of understanding, spent among people of mine own nation at Jerusalem, our much frequented metropolis, know all the Jews there, and the multitudes of others who come to worship thither, which knew me from the beginning of school education itself, (if they would fairly testify what is in their power) that after the most straitest (b) sect in their ways of

(a) He was a prince of great dignity, good disposition, sedate mind, intelligent and prudent. By permission of the emperor, he directed the sacred treasure, governed the temple, and nominated the high priest. *Jos. B. J. l. ii. c. 16.* (b) Greek, heresy. A word of middle acceptance, though afterwards used for a judgement in

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

- <sup>a</sup> The criminated should have all due regard paid to them.
- <sup>b</sup> Titles of honour are not to be withheld from people of station and power without flattery. This argues no unlawful fear.
- <sup>c</sup> An innocent person desires nothing more than a knowing and

*thinking relative to our (c) religion, I lived a keen scrupulous (d) Pharisee. And now, adapting my sentiments and practice still to the spirit of Moses' divine law, I stand empannelled, and am ready to be judged as criminal, for resting in the hope of the chief things by promise (e) made of the invariable God unto our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and others; unto the fulfilment of which important promise, our whole children belonging to the (f) twelve tribes of Israel however scattered, instantly serving God both (g) day and night, hope at length to come; and for the prime glorious (h) object of which hope's sake, O king Agrippa, I am yet unjustly accused as formerly of the unbelieving Jews. It is true, in place of an earthly kingdom, he has set up a spiritual one; and promises everlasting life with himself in heaven, which certain of them absolutely deride; but why, (i) my honoured auditors, should it be thought a (j) thing incredible<sup>d</sup> with you, or any of the same Jewish*

religion differing from what is true, chap. xxiv. 5. Tit. iii. 10. Then there were three remarkable sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. In his childhood he might have been in schools of Tarsus, and afterwards, academically at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel. (c) Worship, James i. 26, 27. Col. ii. 18. Or what was commonly accounted so, (d) From a Hebrew word denoting separation, by supposed pure faith and holiness from others, see Mat. iii. 6. Acts xxiii. 6. Phil. iii. 5. (e) Deliverance by the Messiah, including a blessed state after death, comp. Gen. xxii. 18. xlii. 10. Deut. xxi. 15. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xi. 1. liii. Dan. ix. 24, 25. Mic. v. 2. (f) According to the sons of Jacob. At this time, ten of them were led into captivity, and did not return as Judah did from Babylon. Their early sentiments however may be referred to, along with those of the few individuals that were left, comp. Luke ii. 36. Jam. i. 1. (g) Intensely, at all times and without intermission. (h) *Viz.* Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had crucified. (i) Here, with earnestness he obviates a tacit objection; and we have his discourse probably much abridged. It is not impossible that the point of interrogation should be put after *why*; and then, *should it be*. &c. Zech. viii. 6. (j) Greek. Not worthy of faith, impossible. So held by Sadducees, and most of the heathen world, see verse 23.

#### REFLECTIONS.

upright judge, comp. chap. xxiv. 10, 11. <sup>d</sup> He who created all things, is omnipotent. God cannot lie or break the promise

*faith, who have examples of like kind upon sacred record, that God, infinitely powerful, should raise the dead hereafter, to live as Christ now does, and to reign in the same heavenly world with him forever? I verily, even as numbers of them, perverted through prejudice and a wrong education, thought with myself once, that I ought to do many grievous things contrary to the (k) name and doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth, as an enemy of heaven, a vile impostor. Which cruel thing I also did in Jerusalem itself, whereunto the whole Sanhedrim were unexceptionable witnesses; and many of the holy innocent, and useful Christian saints (l) did I shut up in prison as execrable, having received authority from the chief priests for that purpose; and when they were put to death by tumultuous violence, I gave, among the rest my ready passionate (m) voice against them. And I punished them of like pestiferous heretics, in every synagogue set apart for pure pious charitable works, by severe scourgings, and compelled them by other hideous tortures, so far as in me lay, to blaspheme (n) Christ; and being exceedingly<sup>e</sup> mad against them, more than most of our people, I,*

(k) Put for his person, as in Acts iv. 12. or profession of his religion, Mat. x. 22. Acts v. 41. (l) Sparing no sex, chap. viii. 3. (m) Approved and forwarded the work, chap. xxii. 20. (n) To disown Christ, to curse both him and his religion. So did Pliny,

## REFLECTIONS.

which he hath made. Even upright people have once thought things to be contrary to religion which they have afterwards found to be the very principal points of it. Said the prefect of Rome to Justin Martyr, Dost thou indeed imagine, that after having thy body scourged, and after having been beheaded, thou shalt ascend unto the heavens, thou who believest thyself to possess the knowledge of true philosophy? To whom his return was, I trust I shall attain whatever they attain who have observed the precepts of Christ; although I should endure whatever thou hast spoken, for I am verily persuaded, that unto every one who hath so lived, the divine grace is reserved to the consummation of all things. I do not merely think so, but I know it of a truth. <sup>e</sup> Passion, without knowledge, is bitter zeal in religion. Minuteness adds to the credibility of a narrative. Here is no verbose systematical display of the faith.

*like a fury, persecuted them from the capital, even unto strange and distant cities around it. Whereupon, as I went on (o) in this dismal work to (p) Damascus the metropolis of Syria, with full authority and commission from the chief Jewish priests, at clear mid-day (q), O mighty king, I saw in the way, and near to the end of my journey, with these very eyes, God is my witness, a sudden astonishing light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun even then, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me (r). And when we were all as one man fallen down to the earth by this excess of glory, I heard a distinct voice from one speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew (s) tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me thus in my beloved people and cause? It is hard for thee to kick against the resisting pricks. And I said, under great astonishment, Who art thou, Lord of such magnificence, whom I can possibly injure? And he said forthwith, I am the late crucified Jesus, whom, though risen from the dead, and dear to the father Almighty, thou so violently persecutest in my saints from ignorant zeal. But now cease from those impious cruelties, rise (t) from off the ground, and stand upon thy feet again: for, after a method so entirely new and miraculous I have (u) appeared unto thee from the right hand of the majesty in heaven for this purpose, to make thee henceforth a minister of my gospel word, and a sure witness both of these things which thou hast already seen for evicition of my present glorious life, and of those things in the which (x) I will yet appear, and make known unto thee; delivering thee so far as may be needed, from the people of the Jews, who will hate you above any other as an apostate, and from the snares and violence of the idolatrous Gentiles likewise, unto both of whom now, and to the last, in an especial manner, I send thee as my ambassa-*

1. 10. ep. 94. comp. 2 Cor. xi. 24. (o) Chap. xxiv. 18. (p) Ninety miles north of Jerusalem. (q) Chap. xxii. 6. comp. Mat. xvii. 2. Dan. xii. 13. (r) To their testimony, you have it likewise in your power to apply. (s) Translated by him into Greek, for the sake of his respectable audience, comp. chap. ix. 4. (t) See verse xiv. chap. ix. 17. (u) Comp. Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. Acts iii. 21. (x) See chap. xviii. 9. xxiii. 14.

*dor.* To open their *present blinded eyes of judgement* from long prejudice and corrupting error (y), through the influence of divine truth (z), and to turn them by that blessed mean from darknels (a) fearful as to things the most necessary, religious and moral, to useful, saving, spiritual light, and, under the guidance of such effective knowledge<sup>1</sup>, from the tyrannous power of Satan (b), the grand adversary of all that is good, unto the service and enjoyment of him who is the only living and true God, that thus repenting by the clear and strong arguments of belief, they may receive the free and full forgiveness of their *bypast* (c) sins to deliver them from the wrath to come, and an everlasting heavenly inheritance among them which are sanctified throughout by the (d) obedience of *steadfast* <sup>1</sup> faith that is in me. Whereupon<sup>2</sup>, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the (e) *undoubted* heavenly vision: but, through divine grace, shewed first unto them of Damalcus (f), whom I set out to persecute, and afterwards to the people at Jerusalem (g), and anon throughout all the other places, villages, and cities, upon the coasts of (h) Judea, and then to the (i) Gentiles wherever I came, that they should repent under true grief of heart for all their former evils, and turn in parti-

(y) Comp. Isa. xlii. 7. Eph. i. 18. (z) Each part of his duty signified by what did happen to himself. (a) Col. i. 13. (b) Comp. Luke x. 10. (c) Comp. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 38, 39. (d) See Acts xx. 32. Eph. i. 18. (e) This would have been deliberate rebellion, comp. Isa. i. 30. Psal. xcv. 7. (f) See chap. ix. 19, &c. (g) Chap. ix. 48. (h) He did not forget the scattered Jews, Acts xiii. 42, 48, xiv. 1, 15, &c. (i) See last note.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>1</sup> Here was pure spiritual freedom, with generous enthusiasm; not only to forsake the religion of his fathers, but hazard the severest sufferings. Confidence in the gospel promises, is the native fruit of obedience from sound belief, Gal. v. 6. James ii. 17. 1 John iii. 23. Faith terminates principally upon God, from whom Christ came, John xii. 44. 1 Pet. i. 21. The dead are raised, or stand again by the continuation of their existence in another world. This is credible from the perfection of God, and important enough to deserve the most attentive regard.

<sup>2</sup> In that which is manifestly right, there needeth no delibera-

cular from idols to worship the one Almighty God, and do all proper good works made known by his beloved son as meet for the outward declared signs of an ingenuous<sup>i</sup> repentance. For these causes only, and not for any wickedness, the unbelieving Jews caught me while worshipping in the temple, and regardless both of that sacred work, (j) and the veneration due to such a house, they went about with great earnestness to kill me even then. Having, therefore, obtained help of God (k) by frequent deliverances and present freedom, so as Christ was pleased to promise, I continue, in the manner you now see, unto this same day, witnessing plainly and openly both to (l) small people and<sup>k</sup> great, saying none other things in the main, than those very things which the later prophets, and (m) Moses himself before them did confidently say should come to pass; that Christ by supreme appointment (n) should suffer<sup>i</sup> grievous and multiplied tortures even unto death, and that he should be the first to all who obediently believed in him that (o) should rise from the dead to life everlasting, and should shew (p) by his apostles, pure, perfect, infallible light of divine knowledge unto the Jewish people (q), and to the idolatrous Gentiles also.

(j) Compare chapter xxi. 27, &c. (k) See Matthew xii. 12; Psalm xviii. 19. (l) Compare Deuter. i. 17. 1 Samuel xxv. 2. Acts xxii. 23 24 xxv. 8. Or making protestation to both great and small. (m) See Luke xxiv. 47. (n) Comp. Psalm xxii. 15. lili Dan. 9. (o) See 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. (p) Eph. ii. 17. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19. (q) Verse xvii. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 46, &c.

#### REFLECTIONS.

tion. *Cyprian Bishop of Carthage* <sup>i</sup> Faith and repentance are best known from their fruits, Mat. iii. 8. Gal. v. 22, 23. 2 Pet. i. 5, &c. 1 John iii. 3. <sup>k</sup> We should look to God above all instruments. It is most wise, by conciliating methods, to keep up attention. The gospel should be honestly preached to all ranks. <sup>l</sup> Thus God's counsels and actions oppose the opinions of carnal men. Salvation is a matter of the utmost importance to the whole human race.

## SECT. CXIII. FROM VERSE XXIV.

AND as he thus spake for *defending* himself, Festus, *who had been but for a little while the Roman governor, and ignorant of both Jewish and Christian principles*, said with a loud earnest voice, Paul thou art certainly beside thyself, *(a) thus to talk of a dead crucified man, rising to life again, ascending to heaven, and there signally honoured*: much learning *(b) out of those thy imaginary sacred books*, I am now confident doth make *(c)* thee mad. But he, the prisoner, calmly said, <sup>a</sup> I am not mad, most noble *(d)* Festus, as you suppose, but speak forth the *(e)* words of unquestionable truth and soberness, *when they are duly considered*. For the king himself now present, and an excellently qualified judge, knoweth of these *(f)* things, at least in part, before whom also, *on that account*, I speak freely; <sup>b</sup> for I am persuaded that none of these momentous things are, or could be hidden from him who is of such high place, and *(g)* general estimation; for this thing

*(a)* Comp. 1 Cor. i. 18, 23. ii. 14. *(b)* Sometimes this may have happened from leaving all other things, to apply wholly to difficult studies. Here it was most undeserved. *(c)* Turns you to madness, or turns your brain to madness. *(d)* Usual title of honour at that time. Inexpressibly beautiful here. *(e)* They are the words of a sincere and composed mind. *(f)* Relative to the miracles, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. *(g)* See note

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Reproach itself doth not justify uncivil returns to superiors in rank, comp. verse 24. chap. xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3. Whoever has devoted himself to secular views, must be a stranger to the charms of truth; naked, unportioned, and unadorned. Yet is this last a higher and much more refined luxury than the other. Our highest discoveries, for the present, are but a dawn of knowledge suited to our circumstances; which however, we ought thankfully to acquiesce in, from the prospect of a happier and more perfect state. To know the truth of God, is of all wisdom the chief. Characters should not be drawn from fiction. Half-thinkers, are ever apt to conclude roundly, even upon great subjects. The most insolent treatment of the gospel, ought ever thus to be mildly met by the great and

*relative to Jesus the Saviour, c* was not done in a corner, but exposed to public notice, and the examination of mankind. Permit me, king Agrippa, to put the question, *Believest thou the writings of the ancient Jewish prophets?* *Yes, d* I know for certain that thou believest them to have been divinely inspired. Then Agrippa said unto Paul *discreetly, e* Almost thou, even in so short a time, persuadest me by such natural and earnest manner, to be like thyself, and others now so generally known, *a* *(b)* Christian believer. And Paul said, *in a most benevolent tenderness,* I would *f* to God, *sir*, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day defend the cause of truth, were both almost, *even as the king is*, and altogether such as I am, except *what may appear to be the misery and disgrace of these unmerited* *(i)* bonds. And when he had

*(a)* sect. 112. *(b)* Comp. chap. xi. 26. In the time of the Jewish war, he is said to have allowed the Christians a quiet residence in his territories. *(i)* By this phrase, may be meant confinement in

#### REFLECTIONS.

good. The suitable and graceful discourse of Paul, clearly proves Mat. x. 18, 19. Truth and admirable knowledge are certain evidences of a sound mind. *e* The unwavering testimony of so many persecuted people, behoved to affect, Mat. xxviii. 4, 11. Hope, founded upon clear divine promise, cannot be vain. *d* Evidence is necessary to faith, and should be honoured, verse 3, 22, 23. It is one thing to acknowledge the inspiration of the prophets, and another thing to understand their writings, so as firmly to believe the gospel. *e* The doctrine and evidence of this could not be absurd. *f* Benevolence, no less than piety, leads to obedient faith. A wise conviction is not inimical to what is civil and polite, but the direct reverse. Sufferers for the truth have no just cause of shame, 2 Cor. xi. 23. xii. 10. Less than obedient believing is only *almost*, not *altogether* sound, and has much to answer for. For this, what is future and invisible, the wicked will not deny themselves. When convictions begin to open, let us honestly follow them. Religious joy renders chains themselves light. Faith in Christ makes us all of one mother church, or family, *Just. Mart.* This pious address was the language of enlarged benevolence; had in it nothing of the fanatic, and the enthusiast, but expressed the sentiments of a generous good man. They who are cu-



thus spoken, *by way of apology*, the king *not a little impressed*, rose up *from his place*, and the governor likewise, and Bernice, and they that till then had sat as bearers with them. And when they were gone aside to an adjoining room, or private part of the same hall, they talked over the whole matter between themselves, saying in substance, this poor man it is manifest, from the sincerity and candour with which he defends himself, doeth nothing that is worthy of being punished by death, or even of confinement in bonds. The doctrine which he preaches is perfectly harmless; and though his manner, from persuasion and warmth of heart be bold, <sup>s</sup> he is not assuming; least of all vicious. Then said Agrippa still more directly unto Festus, who had been his judge before, This man, for any thing to me, appearing against him, might have been set at immediate full liberty, if he had not, rather with too much haste, <sup>b</sup> appealed (j) unto the high tribunal of Cæsar.

general, though he might have pled even in chains, comp. *verse 1.* (j) This put it out of the power of an inferior, either to absolve, or condemn. Rome was the most populous and celebrated city of the world, and the emperor then, the greatest person.

#### REFLECTIONS.

rious to learn, will be desirous of the most accurate information. <sup>s</sup> Courage decently free, and pious, marks an innocent mind, comp. chap. xxiii. 9. xxv. 25. God knows how to turn affliction to the benefit of his people, and his own glory. Civil policy has nothing to do with religion, as such. Yet is it friendly to the state, and ought not to be molested. <sup>b</sup> When I consider this apostle, as appearing either before the witty Athenians, or before a Roman court of judicature, in presence of their great men and ladies, I see how handsomely he accommodateth himself to the apprehension and temper of those politer people, &c. *Lord Shaft. Char. V. 1. p. 30.* <sup>i</sup> Remorse, from rash opposition, must prove keen. How deplorable was that state in which the gospel found men! How blissful is the end of a true gospel ministry. The properest method taken at the time, is ever to be reflected upon with satisfaction, comp. *Phil. i. 12.*

## C H A P. XXVII.

## SECT. CXIV. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND when it was determined (a) *by the governor,* that we (b) *should sail from Cesarea into Italy,* *whereof Rome was the capital, and where the emperor abode,* they who acted under him delivered Paul, *whom the Jews had so unrighteously accused,* and certain other prisoners, *on account of great crimes,* unto one (c) named <sup>a</sup> Julius, a centurion of Augustus (d) *Cesar's* (e) band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium *a maritime city of Mysia, not far from Pergamus,* we launched forth, meaning to sail, *not in a straight course, but by the coasts of Asia minor, and stop in different places,* (f) *though for a small time only;* one Aristarchus. Macedonian of Thessalonica, (g) *being in company with us from pure Christian love.* And the next day, we but touched at the famous Sidon (h) *of Phœnicia.* And Julius most humanely and courteously entreated Paul, *while on board,* and gave him liberty, *if he would,* to go unto his Christian (i) friends, *to provide what kind of victuals he chose for the voyage in view,* <sup>b</sup> and refresh himself thus, *as well as by*

(a) See chap. xxv. 12. (b) Paul and his companions, Luke and Aristarchus, verse 2. chap. xix. 29. xx. 4, 5. (c) A freed man, and probably patronized by the Cæsars, comp. chap. xxiii. 4. (d) Part of that legion, see chap. x. 1. (e) Or cohort. (f) Comp. xvi. 11. xviii. 21. (g) See Col. iv. 10. Phil. ii. 4. (h) Comp. Mat. x. 21. (i) See chap. xi. 19. xxi. 3, 4. xxviii. 16. xxiv. 23.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

<sup>a</sup> A truly virtuous character engages the esteem of all around. Let us soften the fierce, and convince the prejudiced to the utmost of our power; then humbly trust in God, Prov. xvi. 7. <sup>b</sup> The Lord Jesus raises up strangers to favour his people, and soften their affliction, chap. xxiv. 3. The wonderful providence of God towards Paul, is one proof, among others, of his being a divine messenger. Friends are valuable assistants in ministerial work, especially in times and places of great trial.

*benevolent godly communion.* And when we had *also* launched from thence, we *by an oblique direction* sailed under the noted large Island of Cyprus, (*j*) because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia, (*k*) and Pamphylia, (*l*) we came to Myra, (*m*) a city of the region of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria in Egypt, (*n*) loaded and ready for sailing into Italy; and he (*o*) for sake of greater convenience and speed, put us therein. And when, from frequent next to dead calms, and weight of cargo together, we had sailed slowly many days successively, and scarce were come over against the promontory (*p*) Cnidus, the wind not suffering us to do better, we sailed (*q*) by a transverse course, under the island of (*r*) Crete, over against Salmone; (*s*) and hardly passing it (*t*) we came unto a place of this same isle, which is called The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. (*u*)

## SECT. CXV. FROM VERSE IX.

NOW when much time was spent by *slow incommo-  
dious traverses*, and when sailing was now, from the ad-  
vanced season of the year, dangerous, because the (*a*) au-  
tumnal fast was now already past, Paul, by the spirit of  
God, admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I

(*j*) Chap. iv. 36. xiii. 4. (*k*) Whereof Tarsus was the chief city, and Paul's birth place, chap. vi. 9. xv. 41. (*l*) See chap. xiii. 17. xiv. 24. The ancient name of a province of the Lesser Asia, situated on the Mediterranean coast, between Lyfia and Cilicia. (*m*) Otherwise Limyra. (*n*) Corn from the east was their common merchandise; Likewise, Persian and Indian goods. (*o*) Adramyttium was out of the way. (*p*) Or Cnidus of Asia, in the Peninsula of Doris of Caria, opposite to Crete. Noted for the worship of Venus. (*q*) As in verse 4. (*r*) Now Candia in the Mediterranean, having once 100 powerful cities. (*s*) Or Salmonium, one of the eastern promontories. (*t*) Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 18. (*u*) Even till now we are told. (*x*) Some *Alajsa*. *Vulg. Thulassa*.

(*a*) That in Lev. xvi. 29, & 1. xxiii. 27, &c. which continued from the close of September, through part of October. By an old writer Vigetius, the seas are said to be shut in the month of November. Michaelmas fairs are still well known in the Mediterranean.

perceive that this voyage, by *severe tempests*, will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the *valuable* lading and ship<sup>a</sup>, but also, *it is probable*, of our (b) lives. Nevertheless, the centurion *Julius* believed the master and owner of the ship, *whom he supposed to be specially versant in such matters*, more than those *intimidating* things which were spoken by Paul *as of himself*. And because the haven, *notwithstanding its agreeable name, wherein they now lay* (c), was not commodious to winter in *during that stormy season*, the more part of the crew and passengers, *having taken council together*, advised, *without further delay*, to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is a haven of *the island* Crete, and lieth, *fronting Africa*, toward the south-west, and *having another entrance* (d) *likewise from the north-west*. And when the south wind blew softly soon after, supposing that they had *for certain* obtained their purpose, loosing thence they sailed close by *the shore of Crete*. But not long after *this again*, there arose against it a tempestuous *contrary* (e) wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught of a sudden thereby, and could not bear up nigh into the face of the wind, we gave over rowing, and drew up our sails quite strait, and let her drive where she would before it. And running thus with only masts and furled canvases under lee of a certain (f) small island which is called (g) Claudia, we had much work, owing to a necessary change of course, in midst of the storm, to come by the boat which was fastened to our ship, and did endanger them both: which, when they had at length taken up for future exigences as nigh as could be, they used

(b) Put for men, as in Acts ii. 41. vii. 14. (c) Comp. Psal xxxii. 6. (d) The bay therefore was a kind of curve. (e) According to some east wave, others north east. A whirling, or tumbling wind. In modern language, a Levanter, see Psal. cxlviii. 8. lv. 9. cvii. 27. (f) Greek, very little. (g) Near to Crete. (h) A com-

#### REFLECTIONS.

\* Foreseen hazards, as much as possible, ought to be avoided.

helps by all on board, undergirding the ship both fore and aft with strong cords; and fearing still, though she might stick together, lest they should fall into the (b) quicksands, at no great distance with their present direction, they strake some little sail, and so were driven off the island. And we, now more at sea, being exceedingly tossed there with a (i) hideous tempest<sup>b</sup>, the next day they lightened the ship of certain weighty cumbrous things, to keep<sup>c</sup> her above the waves; and the third day from rising of the storm, we all began to cast out, with our own hands, even the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun by day nor stars by night, in the course of so many days had appeared for our direction, and no small (j) tempest yet lay hard on us, all hope<sup>d</sup> itself that we should be saved from the extremities of foundering was then taken away.

#### SECT. CXVI. FROM VERSE XXI.

BUT, after long abstinence from food, owing to grief and fear, Paul stood forth as a divine comforter, in the midst of them who were on board, and mildly said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened with due submission unto me, who had divine guidance and your welfare much at heart, and not have so rashly loosed from Crete, and thereby to have gained this dreadful harm of mind and loss of goods. And now, notwithstanding much encompassing evils, I exhort you<sup>b</sup> still to take courage and be of good

mon name then, it is probable, for banks or shallows, adopted from the famous Syrtis on the coast of Africa. (i) Comp. Psal. cvii. 25. Jon. i. 5. (j) Winter, put here for turbulent rainy weather.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>b</sup> The most dear to God and Christ are often much tried. <sup>c</sup> A less loss should be suffered to prevent a greater. <sup>d</sup> The loss of hope, is natural to a growing danger. Let us learn to pity those who are engaged in sea-faring life, and commend them often unto God, Prov. xxx. 4.

<sup>a</sup> We ought to comfort while we admonish. Exercises both, of great piety and prudence. <sup>b</sup> When belief is conciliated, we

(a) cheer; for, *if you follow proper counsel in time coming*, (b), there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but *only of the ship*. For, *while devoutly employed on your account and my own*, there stood by me this dark tremendous night, the good angel of God (c) *most high*, whose I am<sup>c</sup>, *in devotedness of heart*, and whom, *as sole supreme*, I endeavour to serve, saying, Fear not Paul any longer, or to any degree at all; thou must be brought to stand trial before (d) Cesar: and, lo, Almighty God hath given to be preserved with thee<sup>d</sup>, all them that sail in company with thee. Wherefore, sirs, *let me obtest you again to be of good cheer*: for<sup>e</sup> I believe the word of this one only living and true God, that it shall be, *if we use the proper means*, even as it was in so clear a manner told me. Howbeit, *lay your account with the following great trial, that we must<sup>f</sup> be cast upon a certain island and wrecked*.

#### SECT. CXVII. FROM VERSE XXVII.

BUT, when the fourteenth night of suffering was come, as we were driven up and down by tempest in

(a) So chap. v. 38. (b) Comp. verse x. 31. Joel ii. 13. Isa. xxxviii. 5. 1 Sam. ii. 30. xiii. 13, 14. (c) See Jon. i. 9. (d) Comp. chap. xxv. 11. xxiii. 7. Rom. xiv. 10.

#### REFLECTIONS.

may speak with confidence. <sup>c</sup> Insinuated self-defences, and even admonitions, are the most beautiful and cogent. That man is happy above every other, who is conscious of a relation to the God of heaven, as his God and father, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. <sup>d</sup> Under divine government, the good are often made saviours to others, see Gen. xviii. 32. Acts iii. 14. Attention, still and humble hearing are certainly due to such a favoured teacher. <sup>e</sup> The faith of neighbours should be strengthened by example. Amidst the greatest hindrances divine promises ought to be relied upon, Ro. xv. 22, &c. Faith in eternal matters is yet more requisite. <sup>f</sup> One prediction fulfilled, confirms what more is to be fulfilled, comp. chap. xxviii. 1. The wicked, unknown to themselves, accomplish divine purposes. How admirable is providence in this whole affair of Paul!

*the sea named from (a) Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they (b) drew near to some country; and therefore (c) sounded the depth of water, to prevent striking of a sudden, if possible, and found it, by their line, twenty (d) fathoms: and, when they had gone a little further on, they sounded again, and found it only fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing from such increasing shallowness lest they should have fallen with violence upon rocks covered with some little water, and so been split to pieces amidst the heavy surge, they cast four iron anchors, fastened by strong cables, out of the (e) stern, and, these holding for a time<sup>a</sup>, they wished anxiously for the light of day, to know their real situation. And as the shipmen, who had most navigating skill, were about to flee out of the ship, for their own apprehended advantage, regardless of the rest, when they had let down the boat from deck (f) under false colour, as though they would, for greater security, cast forth anchors out of the foreship likewise, Paul said to the centurion, who did not penetrate their real purpose, and to the soldiers under him, Except you oblige these<sup>b</sup> sailors to abide in the ship as managers of her, ye cannot be saved from drowning. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat which tied her to the ship, and so let her fall off entirely into the sea.*

(a) A city at the mouth of the river Po; whence Adrianum, or Adriatic. from this to the Ionic sea. (b) Or judging according to appearance, country drew near to them. (c) By lead, or some such heavy metal, tied to a cord; and greased at bottom. (d) Each about six feet. (e) Or hinder part of the ship. Two from each quarter. Sign of an absolute tempest. (f) See verse xvi. 17.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Darkneſs increaſes blind fears, whereas light ſhews things as they are. <sup>b</sup> Natural means muſt be uſed, as in 1 Sam. ii. 30. xiii. 13, &c. yet not reſted in. Threatenings, as well as promiſes, are often to be underſtood conditionally, as Jon. iii. 4. Jer. xviii. 7, &c. It is the will of God that all proper endeavours be uſed, in dependance upon himſelf. He foreſees what will be complied with, even by thoſe whoſe powers are free. A ſlothful dependance is vain dangerous preſumption.

## SECT. CXVIII. FROM VERSE XXXIII.

AND, while the *break of day* was coming on, *before which nothing more material could be done*, Paul *most earnestly* (a) besought them all to take meat, saying, 'This day is *now* the *complete* fourteenth day (b) *since our dreadful tempest began* that ye have tarried *under a dismal fright*, and, *owing to that*, with grief of heart *together*<sup>a</sup> continued next to fasting (c), having taken nothing which deserves the name of a meal. Wherefore I pray you during the *unworking interval* to take some meat; for this is necessary for preservation of your health and spirits to (d) answer what labour may yet be needed: for, let the dangers we have to go through be ever so numerous and severe, take it upon my word, whom as yet you<sup>b</sup> have experienced to speak what is true and this only, there shall not an hair (e) fall from the head of any of you. And, when he had thus spoken, he took (f) bread in his hands<sup>c</sup>, and gave thanks to God (g) infinitely wise and good for such mean of needful refreshment, accompanied with prayer to obtain his blessing, in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began, by way of example, to eat a comfortable meal. Then, from what the apostle said, laying aside dismal apprehensions, were they all, in a short space, of good<sup>d</sup> cheer, and

(a) See verse 14. (b) Comp. verse 27. (c) Or in abstinence. They wanted not altogether, verse 36. 38, 41. To eat sparingly and irregularly is to fast, Mat. xi. 18. iii. 4. Mark i. 6. compared. So Appian says of an army, which for twenty days together took neither food nor sleep: that is, in a regular way. (d) Comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 28. 29. (e) Proverbial, to signify not the least hurt, and so to banish fear and grief. Mat. x. 30. Luke xxi. 18. (f) Comp. verse 34, 35. (g) See Mat. xv. 36. John vi. 11.

## REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Great and painful affections of the mind, take away all desire of food, and even power to swallow. They cannot for a while attend to any thing else. <sup>b</sup> To hurt health by excess of fasting is the reverse of duty. <sup>c</sup> Saying grace at meals is a clear duty, Mat. xiv. 19. xv. 36. 1 Tim. iv. 3. <sup>d</sup> How many may be preserved by the prayers of one good man. The grace of God



they also took some *proper* meat *as he had done*<sup>c</sup>. And we were in all in the ship *no less than* two hundred three-score and sixteen (*b*) souls.

## SECT. CXIX. FROM VERSE XXXVIII.

AND when they had eaten enough *to refresh and strengthen them for work*, they lightened the ship *considerably that they might draw less water, and so come nearer to the shore*; and (*a*) cast out *most part of the wheat with which she was loaded* into the sea. And when it was day-light, they knew not *even then* the land *before them, from their different tossings and courses*; but they discovered a certain (*b*) creek of sea, *with clear unrocky shore upon each side*, into the which they were minded, *after mutual counsel*, if it were possible to thrust in the ship, *under as much sail as she could well carry, from that open exposed place wherein they now lay*. And, *with this view*, when they had taken up the (*c*) anchors *which would lift, or cut assunder the cables which held them*, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the (*d*) rudder-bands, and hoisted up the (*e*) main-sail full to the wind, and made *with all the force they could contrive* toward shore. And falling into a place where two (*f*) seas met, *and thereby lessened the powers of each other*, they ran the ship a-ground, and the (*g*) fore part of

(*b*) Put for men, verse x 22.

(*a*) Before this they had cleared her upper and lower decks, even to the tackling, verse xviii. 19 (*b*) Or Bay. (*c*) See verse 29. (*d*) Or holdings of the helm. The ancients often had two. (*e*) Some understand this of a sail, near the fore part of the ship. (*f*) Somewhat like an isthmus. Others a bay, washed on each side by the sea. (*g*) Or bow.

## REFLECTIONS.

must not be concealed. <sup>c</sup> Under a sense of divine faithful care, ease of mind will sometimes arise to cheerfulness, even amidst extreme dangers. How much more blessed they, whose eternal life is secured by the word of God and the engagement of a covenant, which he hath confirmed by an oath, comp. Prov. xxiii. 34.

*her stuck fast upon sand-mud, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was soon broken, both keel and (b) ribs, with the continual violence of the waves. And in this critical juncture the soldiers counsel, who were accustomed to slaughter, and afraid of their governors, was to kill the whole prisoners, lest any of them should swim out before them, (i) and after that clearly and for ever escape. <sup>a</sup> But Julius (j) the centurion, willing to save so worthy a person as Paul, whom he now understood to be an object of no less than heavenly favour, kept them back from executing their cruel purpose; and commanded that they which could swim, should, without delay, cast themselves first into the sea, when the swelling surge might best carry them, and get safe to land. And the rest who had no such skill or power, some on loose boards of chests, and some on broken pieces of the ship, since she had struck: and so, through the singular care of divine providence, it came to pass, agreeable to Paul's prediction, that they <sup>b</sup> escaped all safe to land.*

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## C H A P. XXVIII.

### SECT. CXX. FROM VERSE I.

**A**ND when they were thus escaped from shipwreck, then they knew by information, that the

(b) Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 21. (i) The Roman law was very severe in cases of this sort. (j) See verse i. 3.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> Even the cruel and unmerciful should be affected with the interests of those who have done them good. God, for the sake of St. Paul, saved not only the whole company from being drowned, but also all the prisoners from being murdered. To put to death a multitude, even of real wretches, is in violation of every law of humanity, *Laſt*. <sup>b</sup> In the rising esteem of the world for good people, and under sore trials, the glory of God is promoted.

island on *which they were cast*, was called (a) Melita. And the (b) barbarous people *among whom we were now brought*, shewed us, *even contrary to expectation*,<sup>a</sup> no little kindness: (c) *for with speed* they kindled a fire of good materials, and *humanely* received us every one *nigh to it*, because of the present *excessive driving rain*, and because of the *intense cold*. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of *small sticks*, *which then and formerly had been cast in by the surge*, and laid them on the fire *already brisk*; there came a *poisoning* (d) viper out of the *scorching heat*, and fastened by a *close hold of the teeth*, on his *naked hand*. And when the barbarians *who had come to their relief*, saw the *fierce* (e) venomous beast hang *firm* on his hand, they said among themselves, *not intending that any of the strangers should bear their words*, no doubt this man is a<sup>b</sup> murderer, whom though he hath escaped *drowning by the sea*, yet (f)

(a) Lying between Africa and Sicily. Now Malta, famous for the residence of military knights, called also Rhodians. Others will have it to be Melite, lying between Italy and the ancient Illyria. See a learned Dissertation by Jacob Bryant. To these last, the epithet of *barbarous* answers best, v. 2. (b) So were most others then distinguished from the polite learned Grecians, Ro. i. 14. 1 Co. iv. 11. Islanders in particular, were understood to be rough, from want of conversation. (c) Chap. xix. 11. (d) Greek, kind of serpent. Not dissimilar to some parts of the Bruch; and perhaps numbed for a time. (e) Rather animal. (f) The heathens had a goddess of vengeance,

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The kindnesses of an unenlightened people, may upbraid some who have higher pretences to civilization and enjoy better opportunities. After long suffering, hospitable usages are doubly delightful. <sup>b</sup> Rath judges determine of human characters from outward good or evil, which is far from right. Almighty God has wise gracious ends, in afflicting his pious servants. Those who are weak do suddenly change their minds from one extreme to another. The most barbarous have some idea of providence and a moral government. Many examples might be produced of people's being punished in that part of the body which has been the immediate instrument of their sin. The care of providence for the faithful is great, even when least com-

vengeance of heaven (g) suffereth not any longer to live. And he, undisturbed from this alarming event, shook off the venomous beast into the fire, and felt no sort of harm, (h) either then or afterwards. Howbeit they who knew the danger, looked when he should have (i) swollen, as usual throughout the whole body, or fallen down dead suddenly upon the spot : but after they looked under such expectations for a great while, and saw on the contrary, no harm at all come to him, they changed their minds <sup>c</sup> to a direct opposite sentiment, and said audibly, that he was a (j) god in human form.

#### SECT. CXXI. FROM VERSE VII.

IN the same quarters of that shore, were large (a) possessions of the chief (b) magistratical man of the island, whose name was (c) Publius, who, agreeable to his wealth, received <sup>a</sup> us in a humane manner, and lodged us at different places of his own, for the space of three days (d) courteously. And it came to pass at this very time, that the father of Publius (e) lay in bed sick of a dangerous (f) fever, and of a nauseous painful bloody-flux likewise ; to whom, upon information, (g) Paul entered

termed Nemesis. (g) Hath not permitted any longer, &c. They did look upon him as already a dead man. (h) Comp. Mark xvi. 18. Luke x. 19. (i) Greek, inflamed. (j) Comp. Acts xiv. 11, 12. The Heathen deity Hercules, was worshipped here ; who was believed to have strangled in his cradle, no less than two snakes.

Greek, regions, comp. Mat. xxvi. 36. (h) Comp. Mark vi. 21. (c) Common, as a first one, to many others (d) Provided not only necessaries, but things convenient, comp. Mat. xxv. 35 (e) Comp. Mat. iv. 24. Lu. iv. 38. xiii. 16. (f) Greek, fevers, or had frequent violent paroxysms. (g) He might have been desired also,

#### REFLECTIONS.

prehensible, Psal lxxvii. 19. Generosity from the uncultivated by learning, is preferable greatly to proud knowledge, and uncompassionating. <sup>c</sup> The frank and honest, immediately retract censure from ignorance. Having means of better information, we should correct and own our mistakes, John vii. 24.

<sup>a</sup> Kindness to the distressed, is often and immediately reward-

in, and *humbly* prayed (*b*) *before them in the name of Christ, and to the one living and true God*, and laid his hands on him, and healed (*i*) him *forthwith*. So when this was known to be done *upon so eminent a person*, others also which had diseases (*j*) of various kinds in the island, came and were healed of these by similar devout applications, who also, in testimony of their pious gratitude, <sup>b</sup> honoured us with many honours as servants of God most high, and of his divine son whom we taught; and when we departed from thence, to sail farther on, they even laded us with such things as were (*k*) necessary.

### SECT. CXXII. FROM VERSE XI.

AND, after being ashore three months from our arrival at Melita, when the winter was over we departed in a ship of the large trading city Alexandria (*a*) of Egypt, which also had wintered in the isle, whose name, from the sign painted upon it, was Castor (*b*) and <sup>a</sup> Pollux. And landing at Syracuse; (*c*) a most noted city of the island Sicily, we tarried there three days. And sailing from thence, we fetched a compass to the east,

on account of the late miracle. (*b*) A clear proof that he would not be owned as a God, Mat: ix. 18. xix. 13. Luke iv. 14. (*i*) See Mark xvii. 18. vi. 5. vii. 32. (*j*) See Luke xii. 11, 12. John v. 5. xi. 4. (*k*) Like meat, drink, &c. chap. xx. 34.

(*a*) See chap. xvii. 6. (*b*) Dioscuri, that is, the sons of Jupiter: Tutelar deities, supposed to have peculiar influence over storms, and to whose care the ship was committed. Though fictitious, Paul scruples not to name them. (*c*) A city and port in Sicily, situated on a fine bay of the Mediterranean sea; 65 miles south of Messina; of great bulk and wealth: here part of the cargo might be sold.

### REFLECTIONS.

ed. Happy wreck, which issued so well for the glory of God, and spiritual good of mankind. <sup>b</sup> Lingering and painful distempers, suggest salutary reflections to the mind. Providence often works by the hands of generous, hospitable and grateful people. Converse and friendly offices do mutually cheer.

<sup>a</sup> As an idol is nothing; in cases of necessity, and where there is no danger of scandalizing others, a Christian is not polluted

round head-lands, and came to (d) Rhegium in Italy : and, after one day's stay in that place, the south wind blew, and, with so fair a gentle gale, we came the next day to (e) Puteoli, where we found Christian brethren converted from the Jewish religion, and were kindly desired to tarry with them seven <sup>b</sup> days; and having done so, we (f) went directly by land toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren of like precious faith heard of us coming, they too <sup>c</sup> affectionately came (g) to meet us (h) of Paul's company, as far as (i) Appii-forum; and others of them at The Three (j) Taverns, still nearer to the capital; whom when Paul saw so respectfully and tenderly saluting, he thanked a most gracious God, that there were here true worshippers of himself, agreeable to the laws and directions of his dear Son, and took new courage from their converse <sup>d</sup> to advance,

Named from a Greek word, which signifies rupture, as supposed to have been broken off from the island. A difficult navigation to the ancients it was thither. (d) A city of Campania near Naples; and named from warm baths of sulphur, which are there. Called anciently Dicearchia, a great mart for imported corn. (e) Comp. chap. xxvii. 3, 43. The centurion also seems to have consented, chap. xv. 6. xxi. 12. xxv. 3. (f) For like use of the word, see Luke xv. 20 John xvi. 17. (g) Before this they might and probably were written to, comp. Acts ii. 10. (h) Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus. (i) A city named from Apicius Claudius a Roman senator. Forum, from market place. So forum Livii, forum Julii. (j) Some warehouses, on the east road to the city,

#### REFLECTIONS.

by such things, see 1 Cor. viii. 4, 7, &c. <sup>b</sup> The good earnestly desire opportunities of hearing and conversing, for improvement. <sup>c</sup> Brotherly love and respect for sacred office grudge no labour and expence in being kind. It may be entertaining to reflect how much the art of navigation is improved, and with what dispatch now a days commerce is carried on. Hence also learn, how strict an examination the scriptures are capable of undergoing. No history has stood the test that these sacred writings are made to bear. It is very satisfactory to observe the collateral evidence, as it coincides. <sup>d</sup> Religious friendship is the very balm of life. Examples and promises animate. When those meet who favour the gospel, it gives both great courage and comfort. Whilst with a pure heart we worship God according to his law, let us wish well to all

*though a prisoner, to that illustrious city where they all lived. And when we came to Rome, the seat of empire and mistress of the world, the centurion Julius, as his orders were, delivered the prisoners over to the (k) captain of the pretorian guard: but Paul, <sup>e</sup> through good services of that same (l) Julius, was suffered to dwell, wheresoever he chose, by himself, till his cause might be heard, (m) with a soldier that kept him, by a (n) chain of some length which was tied to both.*

# SECT. CXXIII. FROM VERSE XVII.

AND it came to pass, that after three days from our arrival in the great city, Paul called, by certain friends, the chief of the Jews (a) belonging to it, on account of both dignity and learning together, that he might religiously converse with them. And when, agreeable to his desire, they were come together where he dwelt, he said unto them, for clearing his character from any just cause of suspicion, and for preparing their minds to hear the gospel: (b) Men and brethren of the same respectable progenitors, though I have committed nothing against the beloved Israelitish people, or customs of our venerable fathers,

and stored with provisions, wine, &c. like an inn. (k) He seems to have been Burrhus, the intimate of Seneca, under Nero. (l) Perhaps also, Festus' account might have assisted, chap. xxv. 18, 19. (m) Comp. Gen. xxx. 41. xliii. 32. Zech. xii. 12. xliii. 14. (n) See Sen. ep. v. Col. iv. 18. Phil. i. 7, 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 9. Philem. x. 13.

(a) Comp. chap. xxv. 2. xxviii. 7. They might have returned after the interdict of chap. xviii. 2. (b) Comp. chap. xxii. 1. xxiii.

## REFLECTIONS.

men. They should be gratified instantly who seek for certain instruction. <sup>e</sup> Captivity itself is rendered sweet to the servants of God very often, and useful to others, chap. xxiv. 23. What a happiness to be excused from lying among wretched companions in prison, to a man of sense, education and piety. After all, how trying a state for one of the most upright, benevolent, and generous of mankind.

*as they<sup>a</sup> had them from Moses, yet was I delivered prisoner from those of our own nation at Jerusalem, as one worthy to die, into the (c) hands of the unbelieving and idolatrous Romans; who, when they had minutely examined me (d) once and again, would have let me go free from these bonds and every kind of trouble, because there was no cause which they could prove found by them of being confined, and least of ail, of (e) being punished by death in me. But when some of the Jews, who should have been my best friends, spake fiercely (f) against it, I was constrained with not a little reluctance, to appeal from their judges, unto the supreme tribunal of Cesar, only for prevention of murder; and not that I had ought else by way of revenge, to accuse those belonging to my own nation of; for I have still a very great tenderness and concern for them. For this cause, therefore, have I called for you, as also to see you, dear kinsmen according to the flesh, and to speak with you early as friends, that wrong injurious reports may have no effect, because that, not for crimes, but for the blessed hope of a divine<sup>b</sup> Saviour promised (g) to Israel, and now gloriously fulfilled in Jesus Christ, I am bound with this undeserved chain. And they of the Jewish extract and religion, who lived here and were present, said unto him, We have, as yet, neither received letters from countrymen out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren (h) that came hither of late shewed signs of aversion, or spake any harm*

1. (c) See chap. xxi. 31, &c. xxv. 8, 10. (d) Chap xxiv. 25.  
 (e) See ch. xxiii. 29. xxiv. 23. comp. Mat. xxvi. 31. (f) Ch. xxv.  
 3. (g) Comp. chap. xxvi. 6, 7. Under this was implied a state of future happiness to the righteous, chap. xxiii. 6. xxiv. 15, 21.  
 (h) Comp. chap. vii. 2, 37. xiii. 20, 38.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>a</sup> The ceremonial law might yet be observed by Jews, see chap. xxiv. 8. Only converted heathens were not to be bound.  
<sup>b</sup> By all lawful means ought the minds of people to be guarded against prejudice, verse 22. Without bearing hatred against any we may and ought to defend our own innocence. The resurrection of Jesus was ever at first supposed to be a vain thing.



at all of thee. But we now fondly desire, if you judge us worthy, to hear of thee what thou thinkest in relation to him so lately named; for as concerning this Christian (i)sect, we know that here, as every where<sup>c</sup> else indeed, it is spoken against (j) by both Jews and Gentiles.

#### SECT. CXXIV. FROM VERSE XXIII.

AND when they had appointed him a convenient day to speak, as became so large and momentous a subject, there came, besides those who were present last, many other Jews of the city to him into his own hired lodging: to whom he expounded with much plainness, and testified with equal fidelity, the doctrine of the (a) kingdom of God, under prince Messiah; persuading them (b) to the utmost of his power, by an offer of various solid arguments, concerning the truth of Jesus his divine mission, taken both out of the law of (c) Moses, and out of the<sup>a</sup> subsequent prophets, <sup>b</sup> and that from intense desire of convincing them,

(i) See chap. xxiv. 5, 14. (j) Comp. Luke ii. 34. The Jews cursed them in their synagogues, and sent forth emissaries to hold them out as detestable. The heathens styled them atheists, *Just. Mart*

(a) Comp. Luke xvi. 28. Acts xviii. 1. As to the nature of this kingdom, the Jews were next to universally mistaken, see Luke xvii. 20. (b) Put for endeavour, as in chap. xix. 8. x. 42. xvii. 3. (c) Comp. chap. xiv. 4. xvii. 38. xiii. 9.

#### REFLECTIONS.

<sup>c</sup> Hence observe, in the eloquent expressions of an admired author, what must have been the real causes of the progress and establishment of Christianity: "How, of a pure and humble religion, which gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, it grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the capital." *Gibbon's History*. It is one of the sleights of controversy to give bad names to an antagonist. *Lord Hailes*. All men upon earth cannot make falsehood truth, and truth falsehood.

<sup>a</sup> Even the wisest pious endeavours may not savingly affect all, as in chap. xix. 8. xxviii. 24. Intent speech upon a great affair will sometimes lengthen out considerably. <sup>b</sup> Much di-

*throughout the whole day from morning till evening. And some hearers believed, then and afterwards, the things which were so suitably spoken by Paul, (c) and some, most miserably blinded by secular prejudices and false reports, <sup>c</sup> believed not. And when, <sup>d</sup> owing to this, they agreed not among themselves, they departed from him to mind their worldly concerns and to take little more thought about the matter, after that Paul, who knew the force of their hasty and causeless prejudices, who abode in unbelief, had spoken this other one tremendous word: Well indeed spake (d) the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the (e) prophet, unto our (f) similarly wicked fathers of the Jewish land, saying in vision from his lofty throne, Go, as my messenger, unto this hardened contumacious people, and say, <sup>e</sup> hearing ye shall (g) hear, and shall not favourably understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive for your eternal good. For the (h) heart of this*

(d) Or God by his spirit, similar to Rom. iii. 19. John vii. 38. xix. 37. Rom. iv. 3. x. 6, 8. (e) Comp. chap. vi. 9, of Isaiah, with Mat. xiii. 15. (f) Put for concerning, as in Mark xii. 12. Luke xix. 9. (g) Will hear (h) Put for mind, see John xii. 40.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ligence and care, as well as good learning, is requisite to discharge aright the preaching office. We know enough to confirm our faith in the gospel, if teachable, and if not, the whole discourse at large would have occasioned new cavils. Paul had skill to make both his bondage and liberty turn to the interest of Christianity. Apostolical sufferings, for zeal and diligence, made the gospel to be more inquired into; some from curiosity, and others from a more virtuous disposition, comp. Phil. i. 13. Christians also are encouraged by such examples. <sup>c</sup> The very same word of God has not always the same good effect, Luke viii. 11, 12, &c. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Acts xvii. 4, 5. Vague unsatisfactory information ought not to be rested in. Prejudice, as yet, had made the greater part of them reject Christianity. Attentive curiosity to learn, should not be refused. <sup>d</sup> The gospel of Christ, which leads to unity and love, may, through human corruption, prove the cause of angry and cruel dissensions, Mat. x. 34, &c. Luke xii. 51, 52. <sup>e</sup> From the change of tenses, it appears that the blame of disobedience falls entirely upon people's selves, comp. Mat. xiii. 14. We may be termed chil-

people ' is waxed gross, and absolutely unspiritual as by fat, and their ears are dull of hearing divine things, and their eyes of judgement have they obstinately closed, lest they should see truth with those their mental eyes, and hear what would convince them with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be (i) converted from the love of bygone evil practices, and I should thus perfectly and for ever heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, on purpose, if possible, to provoke you unto jealousy who so criminally neglect present merciful offers, that the salvation of God from extreme guilt and wretchedness which you deserve, by his most dear Son, is sent, under clear positive divine <sup>s</sup> order, unto the idolatrous (j) Gentiles every where, and that they, now so unenlightened, will assuredly hear it (k), and improve to their eternal good the word of grace which you make light of. And when he had said these necessary sharp words, the Jews departed home, with minds full of thought, and, both on their way at that time and afterwards, had great (l) reasoning among themselves about the important point.

#### SECT. CXXV. FROM VERSE XXX.

AND Paul, amidst those who were most his enemies,

(i) Or convert themselves, Beza. (j) Comp. Eph. ii. 12. Acts xiii. 46. Isa. xii. 3. xxvi. 1. lx. 6, 18. Rom. xi. 11. 30. (k) Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts xxvi. 17 John v. 22, 24. (l) Much debate, or disputing, comp. chap. xv. 7. 1 Tim. i. 4 vi. 4.

#### REFLECTIONS.

dren of those whom we most resemble. How deplorable to be spiritually blind and deaf under the brightest light of the gospel, and its loudest proclamations. Adored be divine grace, that any are inclined to hear and obey. Ministers find in such a sufficient recompence to all their labours and hazards, Psal. lxxvi. 10. ' Vicious sensual affections stupify the soul. <sup>s</sup> They who suffer and perish by guilt, ought not with reason to complain of their having wanted the benefit of good advice and fair warning. They who are unwilling to afford a patient hearing, are, humanely speaking, incapable of profiting by any thing. By not conforming to the world, Christianity overthrew the mighty fabric of Paganism. Lord Hailes.

dwelt at Rome two whole years, *not close confined but as a prisoner at large*, in his own private hired house; and there (a) received, with kind uniform affection, all that came in unto him, preaching with great ardour and zeal the gospel (b) kingdom of God established in the person of his Son, and teaching those things which concern the exalted Lord Jesus Christ<sup>a</sup>, from written divine oracles and special revelations made to himself, with all becoming (c) confidence, no man whatever forbidding him so (d) good a work.

(a) He might be here allowed likewise to labour for necessities. As Peter is not mentioned nor saluted in the end of the epistle to the Romans, it would not seem that he was then bishop of Rome. (b) See Mark xiv. 43. Acts xviii. 23. (c) Or freedom of speech, and unawed, chap. iv. 31. viii. 2, 7. xix. 8. (d) Thus far, St. Luke, his upright bold companion and fellow labourer. Other histories narrate, that Nero Cesar, who for some years ruled wisely, did acquit Paul and dismiss him from Rome: that he travelled through much of Italy, Gaul, Spain, Greece and Asia: After eight or ten years, he was brought back to Rome, and under the cruel tyranny of Nero, did suffer martyrdom, with exquisite tortures, as did many other Christians, comp. with Tacit. l. v. Euseb. Hier. Damasus and others.

#### REFLECTIONS.

\* Compends of Paul's doctrine may be seen, Acts ix. 22. xiii. 23. xvii. 3, 31. xviii. 5. xxvi. 3. In all, God's goodness ought to be owned, Acts xxiii. 11. From Rome, Paul wrote his epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, with his second epistle to Timothy. Unto every one who visits us, we should be willing to communicate the doctrine of truth, *Just. Mart.* To be allowed to profess theism in Rome was no small favour. What bears the most discouraging aspect, has often the best of consequences. Rejected servants of God, by some, must seek their consolation from the faith and obedience of others. Here St. Luke's gospel, and the book of the Acts are said, upon good evidence, to have been revised by Paul, comp. Phil iv. 22. Col iv. 16. His own writings are immortal monuments.